L. Prevost propre

à Mad^e. Jane Marcet.

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THE THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS.

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

OF the Propriety of Action.

SECTION I.

Of the ſenſe of propriety Page 1

CHAP. I.

Of Sympathy 1

CHAP. II.

Of the Pleaſure of mutual Sympathy 10

CHAP. III.

Of the manner in which we judge of the propriety or impropriety of the affections of other men, by their concord or diſſonance with our own 16

CHAP. IV.

The ſame ſubject continued 21

CHAP. V.

Of the amiable and respectable virtues Page 30

SECTION II.

Of the degrees of the different passions which are consistent with propriety. 37

CHAP. I.

Of the passions which take their origin from the body 38

CHAP. II.

Of those passions which take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination. 45

CHAP. III.

Of the unsocial passions 51

CHAP IV.

Of the social passions 60

CHAP. V.

Of the selfish passions 64

SECTION III.

Of the effects of prosperity and adversity upon the judgment of mankind with regard to the propriety of action; and why it is more easy to obtain their approbation in the one state than in the other 71

CHAP. I.

That though our sympathy with sorrow is generally a more lively sensation than our sympathy with joy, it commonly falls much more short of the violence of what is felt by the person principally concerned Page 71

CHAP. II.

Of the origin of ambition, and of the distinction of ranks 83

CHAP. III.

Of the stoical philosophy 99

PART II.

Of Merit and Demerit; or of the objects of reward and punishment.

SECTION I.

Of the sense of merit and demerit 109

CHAP. I.

That whatever appears to be the proper object of gratitude, appears to deserve reward; and that, in the same manner, whatever appears to be the proper object of resentment, appears to deserve punishment 110

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the proper objects of gratitude and resentment. 114

CHAP. III.

That where there is no approbation of the conduct of the person who confers the benefit, there is little sympathy with the gratitude of him who receives it: and that, on the contrary, where there is no disapprobation of the motives of the person who does the mischief, there is no sort of sympathy with the resentment of him who suffers it 118

CHAP. IV.

Recapitulation of the foregoing chapters 121

CHAP. V.

The analysis of the sense of merit and demerit 124

SECTION II.

Of justice and beneficence

CHAP. I.

Comparison of those two virtues 132

CHAP. II.

Of the sense of justice, of remorse, and of the consciousness of merit 140

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the utility of this constitution of nature 146

SECTION III.

Of the influence of fortune upon the sentiments of mankind, with regard to the merit or demerit of actions 161

CHAP. I.

Of the causes of this influence of fortune 164

CHAP. II.

The extent of this influence of fortune 170

CHAP. III.

Of the final cause of this irregularity of sentiments 185

PART III.

Of the foundation of our judgments concerning our own sentiments and conduct, and of the sense of duty.

CHAP I.

Of the consciousness of merited praise or blame 191

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

In what manner our own judgments refer to what ought to be the judgments of others: and of the origin of general rules 198

CHAP. III.

Of the influence and authority of the general rules of morality, and that they are justly regarded as the laws of the Deity. 229

CHAP. IV.

In what cases the sense of duty ought to be the sole principle of our conduct; and in what cases it ought to concur with other motives 247

PART IV.

Of the effect of utility upon the sentiments of approbation.

CHAP. I.

Of the beauty which the appearance of Utility bestows upon all the productions of art, and of the extensive influence of this species of beauty 263

CHAP. II.

Of the beauty which the appearance of Utility bestows upon the characters and actions of men; and how

how far the perception of this beauty may be regarded as one of the original principles of approbation 278

PART V.

Of the influence of cuſtom and faſhion upon the ſentiments of moral approbation and diſapprobation.

CHAP. I.

Of the influence of cuſtom and faſhion upon our notions of beauty and deformity 291

CHAP. II.

Of the influence of cuſtom and faſhion upon moral ſentiments 303

PART VI.

Of Syſtems of Moral Philoſophy.

SECTION I.

Of the queſtions which ought to be examined in a theory of moral ſentiments 325

SECTION II.

Of the different accounts which have been given to the nature of virtue 328

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of those systems which make virtue consist in propriety 330

CHAP. II.

Of those systems which make virtue consist in prudence 348

CHAP. III.

Of those systems which make virtue consist in benevolence 359

CHAP. IV.

Of licentious systems 370

SECTION III.

Of the different systems which have been formed concerning the principle of approbation.

CHAP. I.

Of those systems which deduce the principle of approbation from self-love. 388

CHAP. II.

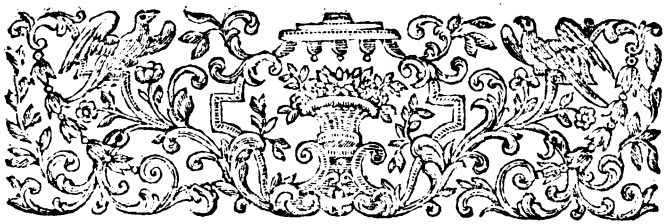
Of those systems which make reason the principle of approbation. 393

CHAP. III.

Of those systems which make sentiment the principle of approbation. 399

SECTION IV.

Of the manner in which different authors have treated of the practical rules of morality. 412



PART I.

Of the Propriety of Action.

Consisting of three Sections.

SECTION I.

Of the Sense of Propriety.

CHAP. I.

Of Sympathy.

HOW selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others,

when we either ſee it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That we often derive ſorrow from the ſorrow of others is a matter of fact too obvious to require any inſtances to prove it; for this ſentiment, like all the other original paſſions of human nature, is by no means confined to the virtuous and humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility. The greateſt ruffian, the moſt hardened violator of the laws of ſociety, is not altogether without it.

As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourſelves ſhould feel in the like ſituation. Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourſelves are at our eaſe, our ſenſes will never inform us of what he ſuffers. They never did and never can carry us beyond our own perſons, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his ſenſations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by repreſenting to us what would be our own, if we were in his caſe. It is the impreſſions of our own ſenſes only, not thoſe of his, which our imaginations copy. By the imagination we place ourſelves in his ſituation, we conceive ourſelves enduring all the ſame torments, we enter as it were into his body and become in ſome meaſure him, and thence form ſome idea of his ſenſations, and even feel ſomething which, though weaker in

in degree, is not altogether unlike them. His agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourſelves, when we have thus adopted and made them our own, begin at laſt to affect us, and we then tremble and ſhudder at the thought of what he feels. For as to be in pain or diſtreſs of any kind excites the moſt exceſſive ſorrow, ſo to conceive or to imagine that we are in it, excites ſome degree of the ſame emotion, in proportion to the vivacity or dulneſs of the conception.

That this is the ſource of our fellow-feeling for the miſery of others, that it is by changing places in fancy with the ſufferer, that we come either to conceive or to be affected by what he feels, may be demonſtrated by many obvious obſervations, if it ſhould not be thought ſufficiently evident of itſelf. When we ſee a ſtroke aimed and juſt ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another perſon, we naturally ſhrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm; and when it does fall, we feel it in ſome meaſure, and are hurt by it as well as the ſufferer. The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the ſlack rope, naturally writhe and twiſt and balance their own bodies, as they ſee him do, and as they feel that they themſelves muſt do if in his ſituation. Perſons of delicate fibres and a weak conſtitution of body, complain that in looking on the ſores and ulcers which are expoſed by beggars in the ſtreets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneaſy ſenſation in the correſpondent part of their own bodies. The horror which they

conceive at the miſery of thoſe wretches affects that particular part in themſelves more than any other; becauſe that horror ariſes from conceiving what they themſelves would ſuffer, if they really were the wretches whom they are looking upon, and if that particular part in themſelves was actually affected in the ſame miſerable manner. The very force of this conception is ſufficient, in their feeble frames, to produce that itching or uneaſy ſenſation complained of. Men of the moſt robuſt make, obſerve that in looking upon ſore eyes they often feel a very ſenſible ſoreneſs in their own, which proceeds from the ſame reaſon; that organ being in the ſtrongeſt man more delicate than any other part of the body is in the weakeſt.

Neither is it thoſe circumſtances only, which create pain or ſorrow, that call forth our fellow-feeling. Whatever is the paſſion which ariſes from any object in the perſon principally concerned, an analagous emotion ſprings up, at the thought of his ſituation, in the breaſt of every attentive ſpectator. Our joy for the deliverance of thoſe heroes of tragedy or romance who intereſt us, is as ſincere as our grief for their diſtreſs, and our fellow-feeling with their miſery is not more real than that with their happineſs. We enter into their gratitude towards thoſe faithful friends who did not deſert them in their difficulties; and we heartily go along with their reſentment againſt thoſe perfidious traitors who injured, abandoned, or deceived them. In every paſ-

paſſion of which the mind of man is ſuſceptible, the emotions of the by-ſtander always correſpond to what, by bringing the caſe home to himſelf, he imagines, ſhould be the ſentiments of the ſufferer.

Pity and compaſſion are words appropriated to ſignify our fellow-feeling with the ſorrow of others. Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the ſame, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made uſe of to denote our fellow-feeling with any paſſion whatever.

Upon ſome occaſions ſympathy may ſeem to ariſe meerly from the view of a certain emotion in another perſon. The paſſions, upon ſome occaſions, may ſeem to be transfuſed from one man to another, inſtantaneouſly, and antecedent to any knowledge of what excited them in the perſon principally concerned. Grief and joy, for example, ſtrongly expreſſed in the look and geſtures of any one, at once affect the ſpectator with ſome degree of a like painful or agreeable emotion. A ſmiling face is, to every body that ſees it, a chearful object; as a ſorrowful countenance, on the other hand, is a melancholy one.

This, however, does not hold univerſally or with regard to every paſſion. There are ſome paſſions of which the expreſſions excite no ſort of ſympathy, but before we are acquainted with what gave occaſion to them, ſerve rather to diſguſt and provoke us againſt them. The furious behaviour of an angry man is more likely to exaſperate us againſt him-

himſelf than againſt his enemies. As we are unacquainted with his provocation, we cannot bring his caſe home to ourſelves, nor conceive any thing like the paſſions which it excites. But we plainly ſee what is the ſituation of thoſe with whom he is angry, and to what violence they may be expoſed from ſo enraged an adverſary. We readily, therefore, ſympathize with their fear or reſentment, and are immediately diſpoſed to take party againſt the man from whom they appear to be in ſo much danger.

If the very appearances of grief and joy inſpire us with ſome degree of the like emotions, it is becauſe they ſuggeſt to us the general idea of ſome good or bad fortune that has befallen the perſon in whom we obſerve them: and in theſe paſſions this is ſufficient to have ſome little influence upon us. The effects of grief and joy terminate in the perſon who feels thoſe emotions, of which the expreſſions do not, like thoſe of reſentment, ſuggeſt to us the idea of any other perſon for whom we are concerned, and whoſe intereſts are oppoſite to his. The general idea of good or bad fortune, therefore, creates ſome concern for the perſon who has met with it, but the general idea of provocation excites no ſympathy with the anger of the man who has received it. Nature, it ſeems, teaches us to be more averſe to enter into this paſſion, and, till informed of its cauſe, to be diſpoſed rather to take part againſt it.

Even

Even our ſympathy with the grief or joy of another, before we are informed of the cauſe of either, is always extremely imperfect. General lamentations, which expreſs nothing but the anguiſh of the ſufferer, create rather a curioſity to enquire into his ſituation, along with ſome diſpoſition to ſympathize with him, than any actual ſympathy that is very ſenſible. The firſt queſtion which we aſk is, What has befallen you? 'Till this be anſwered, tho' we are uneaſy both from the vague idea of his misfortune, and ſtill more from torturing ourſelves with conjectures about what it may be, yet our fellow-feeling is not very conſiderable.

Sympathy, therefore, does not ariſe ſo much from the view of the paſſion, as from that of the ſituation which excites it. We ſometimes feel for another, a paſſion of which he himſelf ſeems to be altogether incapable; becauſe when we put ourſelves in his caſe, that paſſion ariſes in our breaſt from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality. We bluſh for the impudence and rudeneſs of another, though he himſelf appears to have no ſenſe of the impropriety of his own behaviour; becauſe we cannot help feeling with what confuſion we ourſelves ſhould be covered, had we behaved in ſo abſurd a manner.

Of all the calamities to which the condition of mortality expoſes mankind, the loſs of reaſon appears, to thoſe who have the leaſt ſpark of humanity, by far the moſt dreadful, and

they behold that laſt ſtage of human wretchedneſs with deeper commiſeration than any other. But the poor wretch, who is in it, laughs and ſings perhaps, and is altogether inſenſible of his own miſery. The anguiſh which humanity feels, therefore, at the ſight of ſuch an object, cannot be the reflection of any ſentiment of the ſufferer. The compaſſion of the ſpectator muſt ariſe altogether from the conſideration of what he himſelf would feel if he was reduced to the ſame unhappy ſituation, and, what perhaps is impoſſible, was at the ſame time able to regard it with his preſent reaſon and judgment.

What are the pangs of a mother when ſhe hears the moanings of her infant that during the agony of diſeaſe cannot expreſs what it feels? In her idea of what it ſuffers, ſhe joins, to its real helpleſſneſs, her own conſciouſneſs of that helpleſſneſs, and her own terrors for the unknown conſequences of its diſorder; and out of all theſe forms, for her own ſorrow, the moſt complete image of miſery and diſtreſs. The infant, however, feels only the uneaſineſs of the preſent inſtant, which can never be great. With regard to the future it is perfectly ſecure, and in its thoughtleſſneſs and want of foreſight poſſeſſes an antidote againſt fear and anxiety, the great tormentors of the human breaſt, from which reaſon and philoſophy will in vain attempt to defend it when it grows up to a man.

We ſympathize even with the dead, and overlooking what is of real importance in their

their ſituation, that awful futurity which awaits them, we are chiefly affected by thoſe circumſtances which ſtrike our ſenſes, but can have no influence upon their happineſs. It is miſerable, we think, to be deprived of the light of the ſun; to be ſhut out from life and converſation; to be laid in the cold grave a prey to corruption and the reptiles of the earth; to be no more thought of in this world, but to be obliterated in a little time from the affections and almoſt from the memory of their deareſt friends and relations. Surely, we imagine, we can never feel too much for thoſe who have ſuffered ſo dreadful a calamity. The tribute of our fellow-feeling ſeems doubly due to them now when they are in danger of being forgot by every body: and, by the vain honours which we pay to their memory, we endeavour, for our own miſery, artificially to keep alive our melancholy remembrance of their misfortune. That our ſympathy can afford them no conſolation ſeems to be an addition to their calamity; and to think that all we can do is unavailing, and that, what alleviates all other diſtreſs, the regret, the love and the lamentations of their friends, can yield no comfort to them, ſerves only to exaſperate our ſenſe of their miſery. The happineſs of the dead, however, moſt aſſuredly, is affected by none of theſe circumſtances; nor is it the thought of theſe things which can ever diſturb the profound ſecurity of their repoſe. The idea of that dreary and endleſs melancholy, which the

the fancy naturally aſcribes to their condition, ariſes altogether from our joining to the change which has been produced upon them, our own conſciouſneſs of that change, from our putting ourſelves in their ſituation, and from our lodging, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, our own living ſouls in their inanimated bodies, and thence conceiving what would be our emotions in this caſe. It is from this very illuſion of the imagination, that the foreſight of our own diſſolution is ſo terrible to us, and that the idea of thoſe circumſtances, which undoubtedly can give us no pain when we are dead, makes us miſerable while we are alive. And from thence ariſes one of the moſt important principles in human nature, the dread of death, the great poiſon to the happineſs, but the great reſtraint upon the injuſtice of mankind, which, while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the ſociety.

CHAP. II.

Of the Pleaſure of mutual Sympathy.

BUT whatever may be the cauſe of ſympathy, or however it may be excited, nothing pleaſes us more than to obſerve in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breaſt; nor are we ever ſo much ſhocked as by the appearance of the contrary.

contrary. Thoſe who are fond of deducing all our ſentiments from certain refinements of ſelf-love, think themſelves at no loſs to account, according to their own principles, both for this pleaſure and this pain. Man, ſay they, conſcious of his own weakneſs and of the need which he has for the aſſiſtance of others, rejoices whenever he obſerves that they adopt his own paſſions, becauſe he is then aſſured of that aſſiſtance; and grieves whenever he obſerves the contrary, becauſe he is then aſſured of their oppoſition. But both the pleaſure and the pain are always felt ſo inſtantaneouſly, and often upon ſuch frivolous occaſions, that it ſeems evident that neither of them can be derived from any ſuch ſelf-intereſted conſideration. A man is mortified when, after having endeavoured to divert the company, he looks round and ſees that no-body laughs at his jeſts but himſelf. On the contrary, the mirth of the company is highly agreeable to him, and he regards this correſpondence of their ſentiments with his own as the greateſt applauſe.

Neither does his pleaſure ſeem to ariſe altogether from the additional vivacity which his mirth may receive from ſympathy with theirs, nor his pain from the diſappointment he meets with when he miſſes this pleaſure; though both the one and the other, no doubt, do in ſome meaſure. When we have read a book or poem ſo often that we can no longer find any amuſement in reading it by ourſelves, we can ſtill take pleaſure in reading it to a

companion.

companion. To him it has all the graces of novelty; we enter into the ſurprize and admiration which it naturally excites in him, but which it is no longer capable of exciting in us; we conſider all the ideas which it preſents rather in the light in which they appear to him, than in that in which they appear to ourſelves, and we are amuſed by ſympathy with his amuſement which thus enlivens our own. On the contrary, we ſhould be vexed if he did not ſeem to be entertained with it, and we could no longer take any pleaſure in reading it to him. It is the ſame caſe here. The mirth of the company, no doubt, enlivens our own mirth, and their ſilence, no doubt, diſappoints us. But though this may contribute both to the pleaſure which we derive from the one, and to the pain which we feel from the other, it is by no means the ſole cauſe of either; and this correſpondence of the ſentiments of others with our own appears to be a cauſe of pleaſure, and the want of it a cauſe of pain, which cannot be accounted for in this manner. The ſympathy, which my friends expreſs with my joy, might, indeed, give me pleaſure by enlivening that joy; but that which they expreſs with my grief could give me none, if it ſerved only to enliven that grief. Sympathy, however, enlivens joy and alleviates grief. It enlivens joy by preſenting another ſource of ſatisfaction; and it alleviates grief by inſinuating into the heart almoſt the only agreeable ſenſation which

which it is at that time capable of receiving.

It is to be obſerved accordingly, that we are ſtill more anxious to communicate to our friends our diſagreeable than our agreeable paſſions, that we derive ſtill more ſatisfaction from their ſympathy with the former than from that with the latter, and that we are ſtill more ſhocked by the want of it.

How are the unfortunate relieved when they have found out a perſon to whom they can communicate the cauſe of their ſorrow? Upon his ſympathy they ſeem to diſburthen themſelves of a part of their diſtreſs: he is not improperly ſaid to ſhare it with them. He not only feels a ſorrow of the ſame kind with that which they feel, but as if he had derived a part of it to himſelf, what he feels ſeems to alleviate the weight of what they feel. Yet by relating their misfortunes they in ſome meaſure renew their grief. They awaken in their memory the remembrance of thoſe circumſtances which occaſion their affliction. Their tears accordingly flow faſter than before, and they are apt to abandon themſelves to all the weakneſs of ſorrow. They take pleaſure, however, in all this, and, it is evident, are ſenſibly relieved by it; becauſe the ſweetneſs of his ſympathy more than compenſates the bitterneſs of that ſorrow, which, in order to excite this ſympathy, they had thus enlivened and renewed. The cruleſt inſult, on the contrary, which can be offered to the unfortunate, is to appear to make light of their

their calamities. To ſeem not to be affected with the joy of our companions is but want of politeneſs; but not to wear a ſerious countenance when they tell us their afflictions, is real and groſs inhumanity.

Love is an agreeable; reſentment, a diſagreeable, paſſion: and accordingly we are not half ſo anxious that our friends ſhould adopt our friendſhips, as that they ſhould enter into our reſentments. We can forgive them though they ſeem to be little affected with the favours which we may have received, but loſe all patience if they ſeem indifferent about the injuries which may have been done to us: nor are we half ſo angry with them for not entering into our gratitude, as for not ſympathiſing with our reſentment. They can eaſily avoid being friends to our friends, but can hardly avoid being enemies to thoſe with whom we are at variance. We ſeldom reſent their being at enmity with the firſt, though upon that account we may ſometimes affect to make an aukward quarrel with them; but we quarrel with them in good earneſt if they live in friendſhip with the laſt. The agreeable paſſions of love and joy can ſatisfy and ſupport the heart without any auxiliary pleaſure. The bitter and painful emotions of grief and reſentment more ſtrongly require the healing conſolation of ſympathy.

As the perſon who is principally intereſted in any event is pleaſed with our ſympathy, and hurt by the want of it, ſo we, too, ſeem to be pleaſed when we are able to ſympathize with

with him, and to be hurt when we are unable to do ſo. We run not only to congratulate the ſucceſsful, but to condole with the afflicted; and the pleaſure which we find in the the converſation of one whom in all the paſſions of his heart we can entirely ſympathize with, ſeems to do more than compenſate the painfulneſs of that ſorrow with which the view of his ſituation affects us. On the contrary, it is always diſagreeable to feel that we cannot ſympathize with him, and inſtead of being pleaſed with this exemption from ſympathetic pain, it hurts us to find that we cannot ſhare his uneaſineſs. If we hear a perſon loudly lamenting his misfortunes, which, however, upon bringing the caſe home to ourſelves, we feel, can produce no ſuch violent effect upon us, we are ſhocked at his grief; and, becauſe we cannot enter into it, call it puſillanimity and weakneſs. It gives us the ſpleen, on the other hand, to ſee another too happy or too much elevated, as we call it, with any little piece of good fortune. We are diſobliged even with his joy, and, becauſe we cannot go along with it, call it levity and folly. We are even put out of humour if our companion laughs louder or longer at a joke than we think it deſerves; that is, than we feel that we ourſelves could laugh at it.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the manner in which we judge of the propriety or impropriety of the affections of other men, by their concord or dissonance with our own.

WHEN the original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator, they necessarily appear to this last just and proper, and suitable to their objects; and, on the contrary, when, upon bringing the case home to himself, he finds that they do not coincide with what he feels, they necessarily appear to him unjust and improper, and unsuitable to the causes which excite them. To approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing, as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them; and not to approve of them as such, is the same thing as to observe that we do not entirely sympathize with them. The man who resents the injuries that have been done to me, and observes that I resent them precisely as he does, necessarily approves of my resentment. The man whose sympathy keeps time to my grief, cannot but admit the reasonableness of my sorrow. He who admires the same poem, or the same picture, and admires them exactly as I do, must surely allow the justness of

my admiration. He who laughs at the ſame joke, and laughs along with me, cannot well deny the propriety of my laughter. On the contrary, the perſon who upon theſe different occaſions, either feels no ſuch emotion as that which I feel, or feels none that bears any proportion to mine, cannot avoid diſapproving my ſentiments on account of their diſſonance with his own. If my animoſity goes beyond what the indignation of my friend can correſpond to; if my grief exceeds what his moſt tender compaſſion can go along with; if my admiration is either too high or too low to tally with his own; if I laugh loud and heartily when he only ſmiles, or, on the contrary, only ſmile when he laughs loud and heartily; in all theſe caſes, as ſoon as he comes from conſidering the object, to obſerve how I am affected by it, according as there is more or leſs diſproportion between his ſentiments and mine, I muſt incur a greater or leſs degree of his approbation: and upon all occaſions his own ſentiments are the ſtandards and meaſures by which he judges of mine. disapprobation

To approve of another man's opinions is to adopt thoſe opinions, and to adopt them is to approve of them. If the ſame arguments which convince you convince me likewiſe, I neceſſarily approve of your conviction; and if they do not, I neceſſarily diſapprove of it: neither can I poſſibly conceive that I ſhould do the one without the other. To approve or diſapprove, therefore, of the opinions of

others is acknowledged, by every body, to mean no more than to obſerve their agreement or diſagreement with our own. But this is equally the caſe with regard to our approbation or diſapprobation of the ſentiments or paſſions of others.

There are, indeed, ſome caſes in which we ſeem to approve without any ſympathy or correſpondence of ſentiments, and in which, conſequently, the ſentiment of approbation would ſeem to be different from the perception of this coincidence. A little attention, however, will convince us that even in theſe caſes our approbation is ultimately founded upon a ſympathy or correſpondence of this kind. I ſhall give an inſtance in things of a very frivolous nature, becauſe in them the judgments of mankind are leſs apt to be perverted by wrong ſyſtems. We may often approve of a jeſt, and think the laughter of the company quite juſt and proper, though we ourſelves do not laugh, becauſe, perhaps, we are in a grave humour, or happen to have our attention engaged with other objects. We have learned, however, from experience, what ſort of pleaſantry is upon moſt occaſions capable of making us laugh, and we obſerve that this is one of that kind. We approve, therefore, of the laughter of the company, and feel that it is natural and ſuitable to its object; becauſe, though in our preſent mood we cannot eaſily enter into it, we are ſenſible that upon moſt occaſions we ſhould very heartily join in it.

The

The ſame thing often happens with regard to all the other paſſions. A ſtranger paſſes by us in the ſtreet with all the marks of the deepeſt affliction; and we are immediately told that he has juſt received the news of the death of his father. It is impoſſible that, in this caſe, we ſhould not approve of his grief. Yet it may often happen, without any defect of humanity on our part, that, ſo far from entering into the violence of his ſorrow, we ſhould ſcarce conceive the firſt movements of concern upon his account. Both he and his father, perhaps, are intirely unknown to us, or we happen to be employed about other things, and do not take time to picture out in our imagination the different circumſtances of diſtreſs which muſt occur to him. We have learned, however, from experience, that ſuch a misfortune naturally excites ſuch a degree of ſorrow, and we know that if we took time to conſider his ſituation, fully and in all its parts, we ſhould, without doubt, moſt ſincerely ſympathize with him. It is upon the conſciouſneſs of this conditional ſympathy, that our approbation of his ſorrow is founded, even in thoſe caſes in which that ſympathy does not actually take place; and the general rules derived from our preceding experience of what our ſentiments would commonly correſpond with, correct upon this, as upon many other occaſions, the impropriety of our preſent emotions.

The ſentiment or affection of the heart from which any action proceeds, and upon

which its whole virtue or vice muſt ultimately depend, may be conſidered under two different aſpects, or in two different relations; firſt, in relation to the cauſe which excites it, or the motive which gives occaſion to it; and ſecondly, in relation to the end which it propoſes, or the effect which it tends to produce.

In the ſuitableneſs or unſuitableneſs, in the proportion or diſproportion which the affection ſeems to bear to the cauſe or object which excites it, conſiſts the propriety or impropriety, the decency or ungracefulneſs of the conſequent action.

In the beneficial or hurtful nature of the effects which the affection aims at, or tends to produce, conſiſts the merit or demerit of the action, the qualities by which it is entitled to reward, or is deſerving of puniſhment.

Philoſophers have, of late years, conſidered chiefly the tendency of affections, and have given little attention to the relation which they ſtand in to the cauſe which excites them. In common life, however, when we judge of any perſon's conduct, and of the ſentiments which directed it, we conſtantly conſider them under both theſe aſpects. When we blame in another man the exceſſes of love, of grief, of reſentment, we not only conſider the ruinous effects which they tend to produce, but the little occaſion which was given for them. The merit of his favourite, we ſay, is not ſo great, his misfortune is not ſo dreadful, his pro-

provocation is not so extraordinary, as to justify so violent a passion. We should have indulged, we say; perhaps, have approved of the violence of his emotion, had the cause been in any respect proportioned to it.

When we judge in this manner of any affection, as proportioned or disproportioned to the cause which excites it, it is scarce possible that we should make use of any other rule or canon but the correspondent affection in ourselves. If, upon bringing the case home to our own breast, we find that the sentiments which it gives occasion to, coincide and tally with our own, we necessarily approve of them as proportioned and suitable to their objects: if otherwise, we necessarily disapprove of them, as extravagant and out of proportion.

Every faculty in one man is the measure by which he judges of the like faculty in another. I judge of your sight by my sight, of your ear by my ear, of your reason by my reason, of your resentment by my resentment, of your love by my love. I neither have, nor can have, any other way of judging about them.

CHAP. IV.

The same subject continued.

WE may judge of the propriety or impropriety of the sentiments of another person by their correspondence or disagreement

greement with our own, upon two different occaſions; either, firſt, when the objects which excite them are conſidered without any peculiar relation, either to ourſelves or to the perſon whoſe ſentiments we judge of; or, ſecondly, when they are conſidered as peculiarly affecting one or other of us.

1. With regard to thoſe objects which are conſidered without any peculiar relation either to ourſelves or to the perſon whoſe ſentiments we judge of; wherever his ſentiments intirely correſpond with our own, we aſcribe to him the qualities of taſte and good judgment. The beauty of a plain, the greatneſs of a mountain, the ornaments of a building, the expreſſion of a picture, the compoſition of a diſcourſe, the conduct of a third perſon, the proportions of different quantities and numbers, the various appearances which the great machine of the univerſe is perpetually exhibiting, with the ſecret wheels and ſprings which produce them; all the general ſubjects of ſcience and taſte, are what we and our companions regard, as having no peculiar relation to either of us. We both look at them from the ſame point of view, and we have no occaſion for ſympathy, or for that imaginary change of ſituations from which it ariſes, in order to produce, with regard to theſe the moſt perfect harmony of ſentiments and affections. If, notwithſtanding, we are often differently affected, it ariſes either from the different degrees of attention, which our different habits of life allow us to give eaſily to the

the ſeveral parts of thoſe complex objects, or from the different degrees of natural acuteneſs in the faculty of the mind to which they are addreſſed.

When the ſentiments of our companion coincide with our own in things of this kind, which are obvious and eaſy, and in which, perhaps, we never found a ſingle perſon who differed from us, though we, no doubt, muſt approve of them, yet he ſeems to deſerve no praiſe or admiration on account of them. But when they not only coincide with our own, but lead and direct our own; when in forming them he appears to have attended to many things which we had overlooked, and to have adjuſted them to all the various circumſtances of their objects; we not only approve of them, but wonder and are ſurpriſed at their uncommon and unexpected acuteneſs and comprehenſiveneſs, and he appears to deſerve a very high degree of admiration and applauſe. For approbation heightned by wonder and ſurpriſe, conſtitutes the ſentiment which is properly called admiration, and of which applauſe is the natural expreſſion. The deciſion of the man who judges that exquiſite beauty is preferable to the groſſeſt deformity, or that twice two are equal to four, muſt certainly be approved of by all the world, but will not, ſurely, be much admired. It is the acute and delicate diſcernment of the man of taſte, who diſtinguiſhes the minute, and ſcarce perceptible, differences of beauty and deformity; it is the

comprehenſive accuracy of the experienced mathematician, who unravels, with eaſe, the moſt intricate and perplexed proportions; it is the great leader in ſcience and taſte, the man who directs and conducts our own ſentiments, the extent and ſuperior juſtneſs of whoſe talents aſtoniſh us with wonder and ſurpriſe, who excites our admiration and ſeems to deſerve our applauſe: and upon this foundation is grounded the greater part of the praiſe which is beſtowed upon what are called the intellectual virtues.

The utility of thoſe qualities, it may be thought, is what firſt recommends them to us; and, no doubt, the conſideration of this, when we come to attend to it, gives them a new value. Originally, however, we approve of another man's judgment, not as ſomething uſeful, but as right, as accurate, as agreeable to truth and reality: and it is evident we attribute thoſe qualities to it for no other reaſon but becauſe we find that it agrees with our own. Taſte, in the ſame manner, is originally approved of, not as uſeful, but as juſt, as delicate and as preciſely ſuited to its object. The idea of the utility of all qualities of this kind, is plainly an afterthought, and not what firſt recommends them to our approbation.

2. With regard to thoſe objects, which affect in a particular manner either ourſelves or the perſon whoſe ſentiments we judge of, it is at once more difficult to preſerve this harmony and correſpondence, and at the ſame time,

time, vastly more important. My companion does not naturally look upon the misfortune that has befallen me, or the injury that has been done me, from the same point of view in which I consider them. They affect me much more nearly. We do not view them from the same station, as we do a picture, or a poem, or a system of philosophy, and are, therefore, apt to be very differently affected by them. But I can much more easily overlook the want of this correspondence of sentiments with regard to such indifferent objects as concern neither me nor my companion, than with regard to what interests me so much as the misfortune that has befallen me, or the injury that has been done me. Though you despise that picture, or that poem, or even that system of philosophy, which I admire, there is little danger of our quarrelling upon that account. Neither of us can reasonably be much interested about them. They ought all of them to be matters of great indifference to us both; so that, though our opinions may be opposite, our affections may still be very nearly the same. But it is quite otherwise with regard to those objects by which either you or I are particularly affected. Though your judgments in matters of speculation, though your sentiments in matters of taste, are quite opposite to mine, I can easily overlook this opposition; and if I have any degree of temper, I may still find some entertainment in your conversation, even upon those very subjects.

But

But if you have either no fellow-feeling for the misfortunes I have met with, or none that bears any proportion to the grief which distracts me; or if you have either no indignation at the injuries I have suffered, or none that bears any proportion to the resentment which transports me, we can no longer converse upon these subjects. We become intolerable to one another. I can neither support your company, nor you mine. You are confounded at my violence and passion, and I am enraged at your cold insensibility and want of feeling.

In all such cases, that there may be some correspondence of sentiments between the spectator and the person principally concerned, the spectator must, first of all, endeavour, as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer. He must adopt the whole case of his companion with all its minutest incidents; and strive to render, as perfect as possible, that imaginary change of situation upon which his sympathy is founded.

After all this, however, the emotions of the spectator will still be very apt to fall short of the violence of what is felt by the sufferer. Mankind, though naturally sympathetic, never conceive, for what has befallen another, that degree of passion which naturally animates the person principally concerned. That imaginary change of situation, upon which their sympathy is founded, is but

but momentary. The thought of their own ſafety, the thought that they themſelves are not really the ſufferers, continually intrudes itſelf upon them; and though it does not hinder them from conceiving a paſſion ſomewhat analogus to what is felt by the ſufferer, hinders them from conceiving any thing that approaches to the ſame degree of violence. The perſon principally concerned is ſenſible of this, and, at the ſame time, paſſionately deſires a more compleat ſympathy. He longs for that relief which nothing can afford him but the entire concord of the affections of the ſpectators with his own. To ſee the emotions of their hearts, in every reſpect, beat time to his own, in the violent and diſagreeable paſſions, conſtitutes his ſole conſolation. But he can only hope to obtain this by lowering his paſſion to that pitch, in which the ſpectators are capable of going along with him. He muſt flatten, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, the ſharpneſs of its natural tone, in order to reduce it to harmony and concord with the emotions of thoſe who are about him. What they feel, will, indeed, always be, in ſome reſpects, different from what he feels, and compaſſion can never be exactly the ſame with original ſorrow; becauſe the ſecret conſciouſneſs that the change of ſituations, from which the ſympathetic ſentiment ariſes, is but imaginary, not only lowers it in degree, but, in ſome meaſure, varies it in kind, and gives it a quite different modification. Theſe two ſentiments, however, may,

may, it is evident, have ſuch a correſpondence with one another, as is ſufficient for the harmony of ſociety. Though they will never be uniſons, they may be concords, and this is all that is wanted or required.

In order to produce this concord, as nature teaches the ſpectators to aſſume the circumſtances of the perſon principally concerned, ſo ſhe teaches this laſt in ſome meaſure to aſſume thoſe of the ſpectators. As they are continually placing themſelves in his ſituation, and thence conceiving emotions ſimilar to what he feels; ſo he is as conſtantly placing himſelf in theirs, and thence conceiving ſome degree of that coolneſs about his own fortune, with which he is ſenſible that they will view it. As they are conſtantly conſidering what they themſelves would feel, if they actually were the ſufferers, ſo he is as conſtantly led to imagine in what manner he would be affected if he was only one of the ſpectators of his own ſituation. As their ſympathy makes them look at it, in ſome meaſure, with his eyes, ſo his ſympathy makes him look at it, in ſome meaſure, with theirs, eſpecially when in their preſence and acting under their obſervation: and as the reflected paſſion, which he thus conceives, is much weaker than the original one, it neceſſarily abates the violence of what he felt before he came into their preſence, before he began to recollect in what manner they would be affected by it, and to view his ſituation in this candid and impartial light.

The

The mind, therefore, is rarely so disturbed, but that the company of a friend will restore it to some degree of tranquillity and sedateness. The breast is, in some measure, calmed and composed the moment we come into his presence. We are immediately put in mind of the light in which he will view our situation, and we begin to view it ourselves in the same light; for the effect of sympathy is instantaneous. We expect less sympathy from a common acquaintance than from a friend: we cannot open to the former all those little circumstances which we can unfold to the latter: we assume, therefore, more tranquillity before him, and endeavour to fix our thoughts upon those general outlines of our situation which he is willing to consider. We expect still less sympathy from an assembly of strangers, and we assume, therefore, still more tranquillity before them, and always endeavour to bring down our passion to that pitch, which the particular company we are in may be expected to go along with. Nor is this only an assumed appearance: for if we are at all masters of ourselves, the presence of a mere acquaintance will really compose us, still more than that of a friend; and that of an assembly of strangers still more than that of an acquaintance.

Society and conversation, therefore, are the most powerful remedies for restoring the mind to its tranquillity, if, at any time, it has unfortunately lost it; as well as the best preservatives of that equal and happy temper, which is so necessary to self-satisfaction and enjoyment.

enjoyment. Men of retirement and ſpeculation, who are apt to ſit brooding at home over either grief or reſentment, though they may often have more humanity, more generoſity, and a nicer ſenſe of honour, yet ſeldom poſſeſs that equality of temper which is ſo common among men of the world.

CHAP. V.

Of the amiable and reſpectable virtues.

UPON theſe two different efforts, upon that of the ſpectator to enter into the ſentiments of the perſon principally concerned, and upon that of the perſon principally concerned, to bring down his emotions to what the ſpectator can go along with, are founded two different ſets of virtues. The ſoft, the gentle, the amiable virtues, the virtues of candid condeſcenſion and indulgent humanity, are founded upon the one: the great, the awful and reſpectable, the virtues of ſelf-denial, of ſelf-government, of that command of the paſſions which ſubjects all the movements of our nature to what our own dignity and honour, and the propriety of our own conduct require, take their origin from the other.

How amiable does he appear to be, whoſe ſympathetic heart ſeems to re-echo all the ſentiments of thoſe with whom he converſes, who grieves for their calamities, who reſents their

their injuries, and who rejoices at their good fortune! When we bring home to ourselves the situation of his companions, we enter into their gratitude, and feel what consolation they must derive from the tender sympathy of so affectionate a friend. And for a contrary reason, how disagreeable does he appear to be, whose hard and obdurate heart feels for himself only, but is altogether insensible to the happiness or misery of others! We enter, in this case too, into the pain which his presence must give to every mortal with whom he converses, to those especially with whom we are most apt to sympathize, the unfortunate and the injured.

On the other hand, what noble propriety and grace do we feel in the conduct of those who, in their own case, exert that recollection and self-command which constitute the dignity of every passion, and which bring it down to what others can enter into. We are disgusted with that clamorous grief, which, without any delicacy, calls upon our compassion with sighs and tears and importunate lamentations. But we reverence that reserved, that silent and majestic sorrow, which discovers itself only in the swelling of the eyes, in the quivering of the lips and cheeks, and in the distant, but affecting, coldness of the whole behaviour. It imposes the like silence upon us. We regard it with respectful attention, and watch with anxious concern over our whole behaviour, lest by any impropriety we should disturb that concerted tran-

quillity, which it requires ſo great an effort to ſupport.

The inſolence and brutality of anger, in the ſame manner, when we indulge its fury without check or reſtraint, is, of all objects, the moſt deteſtable. But we admire that noble and generous reſentment which governs its purſuit of the greateſt injuries, not by the rage which they are apt to excite in the breaſt of the ſufferer, but by the indignation which they naturally call forth in that of the impartial ſpectator; which allows no word, no geſture, to eſcape it beyond what this more equitable ſentiment would dictate; which never, even in thought, attempts any greater vengeance, nor deſires to inflict any greater puniſhment, than what every indifferent perſon would rejoice to ſee executed.

And hence it is, that to feel much for others and little for ourſelves, that to reſtrain our ſelfiſh, and to indulge our benevolent affections, conſtitutes the perfection of human nature; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of ſentiments and paſſions in which conſiſts their whole grace and propriety. As to love our neighbour as we love ourſelves is the great law of chriſtianity, ſo it is the great precept of nature to love ourſelves only as we love our neighbour, or what comes to the ſame thing, as our neighbour is capable of loving us.

As taſte and good judgment, when they are conſidered as qualities which deſerve praiſe and admiration, are ſuppoſed to imply a delicacy

licacy of ſentiment and an acuteneſs of underſtanding not commonly to be met with; ſo the virtues of ſenſibility and ſelf-command are not apprehended to conſiſt in the ordinary, but in the uncommon degrees of thoſe qualities. The amiable virtue of humanity requires, ſurely, a ſenſibility, much beyond what is poſſeſſed by the rude vulgar of mankind. The great and exalted virtue of magnanimity undoubtedly demands much more than that degree of ſelf-command, which the weakeſt of mortals is capable of exerting. As in the common degree of the intellectual qualities, there is no abilities; ſo in the common degree of the moral, there is no virtue. Virtue is excellence, ſomething uncommonly great and beautiful, which riſes far above what is vulgar and ordinary. The amiable virtues conſiſt in that degree of ſenſibility which ſurpriſes by its exquiſite and unexpected delicacy and tenderneſs. The awful and reſpectable, in that degree of ſelf-command which aſtoniſhes by its amazing ſuperiority over the moſt ungovernable paſſions of human nature.

There is, in this reſpect, a conſiderable difference between virtue and mere propriety; between thoſe qualities and actions which deſerve to be admired and celebrated, and thoſe which ſimply deſerve to be approved of. Upon many occaſions, to act with the moſt perfect propriety, requires no more than that common and ordinary degree of ſenſibility or ſelf-command which the moſt worthleſs of

mankind are poſſeſt of, and ſometimes even that degree is not neceſſary. Thus, to give a very low inſtance, to eat when we are hungry, is certainly, upon ordinary occaſions, perfectly right and proper, and cannot miſs being approved of as ſuch by every body. Nothing, however, could be more abſurd than to ſay it was virtuous.

On the contrary, there may frequently be a conſiderable degree of virtue in thoſe actions, which fall ſhort of the moſt perfect propriety; becauſe they may ſtill approach nearer to perfection than could well be expected upon occaſions in which it was ſo extremely difficult to attain it: and this is very often the caſe upon thoſe occaſions which require the greateſt exertions of ſelf-command. There are ſome ſituations which bear ſo hard upon human nature, that the greateſt degree of ſelf-government, which can belong to ſo imperfect a creature as man, is not able to ſtifle, altogether, the voice of human weakneſs, or reduce the violence of the paſſions to that pitch of moderation, in which the impartial ſpectator can entirely enter into them. Though in thoſe caſes, therefore, the behaviour of the ſufferer fall ſhort of the moſt perfect propriety, it may ſtill deſerve ſome applauſe, and even, in a certain ſenſe, may be denominated virtuous. It may ſtill manifeſt an effort of generoſity and magnanimity of which the greater part of men are incapable; and though it fails of abſolute perfection, it may be a much nearer approximation towards perfection,

tion; than what, upon ſuch trying occaſions, is commonly either to be found or to be expected.

In caſes of this kind, when we are determining the degree of blame or applauſe which ſeems due to any action, we very frequently make uſe of two different ſtandards. The firſt is the idea of complete propriety and perfection, which, in thoſe difficult ſituations, no human conduct ever did, or ever can come up to; and in compariſon with which the actions of all men muſt for ever appear blameable and imperfect. The ſecond is the idea of that degree of proximity or diſtance from this complete perfection, which the actions of the greater part of men commonly arrive at. Whatever goes beyond this degree, how far ſoever it may be removed from abſolute perfection, ſeems to deſerve applauſe; and whatever falls ſhort of it, to deſerve blame.

It is in the ſame manner that we judge of the productions of all the arts which addreſs themſelves to the imagination. When a critic examines the work of any of the great maſters in poetry or painting, he may ſometimes examine it by an idea of perfection, in his own mind, which neither that nor any other human work will ever come up to; and as long as he compares it with this ſtandard, he can ſee nothing in it but faults and imperfections. But when he comes to conſider the rank which it ought to hold among other works of the ſame kind, he neceſſarily compares it with a very different ſtandard,

the common degree of excellence which is usually attained in this particular art; and when he judges of it by this new measure, it may often appear to deserve the highest applause, upon account of its approaching much nearer to perfection than the greater part of those works which can be brought into competition with it.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of the degrees of the different paſſions which are conſiſtent with propriety.

INTRODUCTION.

THE propriety of every paſſion excited by objects peculiarly related to ourſelves, the pitch which the ſpectator can go along with, muſt lye, it is evident, in a certain mediocrity. If the paſſion is too high, or if it is too low, he cannot enter into it. Grief and reſentment for private misfortunes and injuries may eaſily, for example, be too high, and in the greater part of mankind they are ſo. They may likewiſe, though this more rarely happens, be too low. We denominate the exceſs, weakneſs, and fury: and we call the defect, ſtupidity, inſenſibility, and want of ſpirit. We can enter into neither of them, but are aſtoniſhed and confounded to ſee them.

This mediocrity, however, in which the point of propriety conſiſts, is different in different paſſions. It is high in ſome, and low in others. There are ſome paſſions which it is indecent to expreſs very ſtrongly, even upon thoſe occaſions, in which it is acknowledged that we cannot avoid feeling them in the higheſt degree. And

there are others of which the ſtrongeſt expreſſions are upon many occaſions extremely graceful, even though the paſſions themſelves do not, perhaps, ariſe ſo neceſſarily. The firſt are thoſe paſſions with which, for certain reaſons, there is little or no ſympathy: the ſecond are thoſe with which, for other reaſons, there is the greateſt. And if we conſider all the different paſſions of human nature, we ſhall find that they are regarded as decent, or indecent, juſt in proportion as mankind are more or leſs diſpoſed to ſympathiſe with them.

CHAP. I.

Of the paſſions which take their origin from the body.

1. IT is indecent to expreſs any ſtrong degree of thoſe paſſions which ariſe from a certain ſituation or diſpoſition of the body; becauſe the company, not being in the ſame diſpoſition, cannot be expected to ſympathiſe with them. Violent hunger, for example, though upon many occaſions not only natural, but unavoidable, is always indecent, and to eat voraciouſly is univerſally regarded as a piece of ill manners. There is, however, ſome degree of ſympathy, even with hunger. It is agreeable to ſee our companions eat with a good appetite, and all expreſſions of loathing are

are offensive. The disposition of body which is habitual to a man in health, makes his stomach easily keep time, if I may be allowed so coarse an expression, with the one, and not with the other. We can sympathise with the distress which excessive hunger occasions when we read the description of it in the journal of a siege, or of a sea voyage. We imagine ourselves in the situation of the sufferers, and thence readily conceive the grief, the fear and consternation, which must necessarily distract them. We feel, ourselves, some degree of those passions, and therefore sympathise with them: but as we do not grow hungry by reading the description, we cannot properly, even in this case, be said to sympathise with their hunger.

It is the same case with the passion by which nature unites the two sexes. Though naturally the most furious of all the passions, all strong expressions of it are upon every occasion indecent, even between persons in whom its most compleat indulgence is acknowledged by all laws, both human and divine, to be perfectly innocent. There seems, however, to be some degree of sympathy even with this passion. To talk to a woman as we should to a man is improper: it is expected that their company should inspire us with more gaiety, more pleasantry, and more attention; and an intire insensibility to the fair sex, renders a man contemptible in some measure even to the men.

Such is our aversion for all the appetites which take their origin from the body: all strong expressions of them are loathsome and disagreeable. According to some antient philosophers, these are the passions which we share in common with the brutes, and which having no connection with the characteristical qualities of human nature, are upon that account beneath its dignity. But there are many other passions which we share in common with the brutes, such as resentment, natural affection, even gratitude, which do not, upon that account, appear to be so brutal. The true cause of the peculiar disgust which we conceive for the appetites of the body, when we see them in other men, is that we cannot enter into them. To the person himself who feels them, as soon as they are gratified, the object that excited them ceases to be agreeable: even its presence often becomes offensive to him; he looks round to no purpose for the charm which transported him the moment before, and he can now as little enter into his own passion as another person. When we have dined, we order the covers to be removed; and we should treat in the same manner the objects of the most ardent and passionate desires, if they were the objects of no other passions but those which take their origin from the body.

In the command of those appetites of the body consists that virtue which is properly called temperance. To restrain them within those bounds, which regard to health and fortune

tune prescribes, is the part of prudence. But to confine them within those limits, which grace, which propriety, which delicacy, and modesty, require, is the office of temperance.

2. It is for the same reason that to cry out with bodily pain, how intolerable soever, appears always unmanly and unbecoming. There is, however, a good deal of sympathy even with bodily pain. If, as has already been observed, I see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg, or arm, of another person, I naturally shrink and draw back my own leg, or my own arm; and when it does fall, I feel it in some measure, and am hurt by it as well as the sufferer. My hurt, however, is, no doubt, excessively slight, and, upon that account, if he makes any violent out-cry, as I cannot go along with him, I never fail to despise him. And this is the case of all the passions which take their origin from the body; they excite either no sympathy at all, or such a degree of it, as is altogether disproportioned to the violence of what is felt by the sufferer.

It is quite otherwise with those passions which take their origin from the imagination. The frame of my body can be but little affected by the alterations which are brought about upon that of my companion: but my imagination is more ductile, and more readily assumes, if I may say so, the shape and configuration of the imaginations of those with whom I am familiar. A disappointment in love, or ambition, will, upon

this account, call forth more ſympathy than the greateſt bodily evil. Thoſe paſſions ariſe altogether from the imagination. The perſon who has loſt his whole fortune, if he is in health, feels nothing in his body. What he ſuffers is from the imagination only, which repreſents to him the loſs of his dignity, neglect from his friends, contempt from his enemies, dependance, want, and miſery, coming faſt upon him; and we ſympathiſe with him more ſtrongly upon this account, becauſe our imaginations can more readily mould themſelves upon his imagination, than our bodies can mould themſelves upon his body.

The loſs of a leg may generally be regarded as a more real calamity than the loſs of a miſtreſs. It would be a ridiculous tragedy, however, of which the cataſtrophe was to turn upon a loſs of that kind. A misfortune of the other kind, how frivolous ſoever it may appear to be, has given occaſion to many a fine one.

Nothing is ſo ſoon forgot as pain. The moment it is gone the whole agony of it is over, and the thought of it can no longer give us any ſort of diſturbance. We ourſelves cannot then enter into the anxiety and anguiſh which we had before conceived. An unguarded word from a friend will occaſion a more durable uneaſineſs. The agony which this creates is by no means over with the word. What at firſt diſturbs us is not the object of the ſenſes, but the idea of the imagination. As it is an idea, therefore, which occaſions

occasions our uneasiness, till time and other accidents have in some measure effaced it from our memory, the imagination continues to fret and rankle within, from the thought of it.

Pain never calls forth any very lively sympathy unless it is accompanied with danger. We sympathise with the fear, though not with the agony of the sufferer. Fear, however, is a passion derived altogether from the imagination, which represents, with an uncertainty and fluctuation that increases our anxiety, not what we really feel, but what we may hereafter possibly suffer. The gout, or the tooth-ach, though exquisitely painful, excite very little sympathy; more dangerous diseases, though accompanied with very little pain, excite the highest.

Some people faint and grow sick at the sight of a chirurgical operation, and that bodily pain which is occasioned by tearing the flesh, seems, in them, to excite the most excessive sympathy. We conceive in a much more lively and distinct manner, the pain which proceeds from an external cause, than we do that which arises from an internal disorder. I can scarce form an idea of the agonies of my neighbour when he is tortured with the gout, or the stone; but I have the clearest conception of what he must suffer from an incision, a wound, or a fracture. The chief cause, however, why such objects produce such violent effects upon us, is their novelty.

novelty. One who has been witness to a dozen dissections, and as many amputations, sees, ever after, all operations of this kind with great indifference, and often with perfect insensibility. Though we have read or seen represented more than five hundred tragedies, we shall seldom feel so entire an abatement of our sensibility to the objects which they represent to us.

In some of the Greek tragedies there is an attempt to excite compassion, by the representation of the agonies of bodily pain. Philoctetes cries out and faints from the extremity of his sufferings. Hippolytus and Hercules are both introduced as expiring under the severest tortures, which, it seems, even the fortitude of Hercules was incapable of supporting. In all these cases, however, it is not the pain which interests us, but some other circumstance. It is not the sore foot, but the solitude, of Philoctetes which affects us, and diffuses over that charming tragedy, that romantic wildness, which is so agreeable to the imagination. The agonies of Hercules and Hippolytus are interesting only because we foresee that death is to be the consequence. If those heroes were to recover, we should think the representation of their sufferings perfectly ridiculous. What a tragedy would that be of which the distress consisted in a cholic. Yet no pain is more exquisite. These attempts to excite compassion by the representation of bodily pain, may be regarded as among

among the greateſt breaches of decorum of which the Greek theatre has ſet the example.

The little ſympathy which we feel with bodily pain is the foundation of the propriety of conſtancy and patience in enduring it. The man, who under the ſevereſt tortures allows no weakneſs to eſcape him, vents no groan, gives way to no paſſion which we do not entirely enter into, commands our higheſt admiration. His firmneſs enables him to keep time with our indifference and inſenſibility. We admire and intirely go along with the magnanimous effort which he makes for this purpoſe. We approve of his behaviour, and from our experience of the common weakneſs of human nature, we are ſurpriſed, and wonder how he ſhould be able to act ſo as to deſerve approbation. Approbation, mixed and animated by wonder and ſurprize, conſtitutes the ſentiment which is properly called admiration, of which, applauſe is the natural expreſſion, as has already been obſerved.

CHAP. II.

Of thoſe paſſions which take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination.

EVEN of the paſſions derived from the imagination, thoſe which take their origin from a peculiar turn or habit it has acquired,

acquired, though they may be acknowledged to be perfectly natural, are, however, but little ſympathiſed with. The imaginations of mankind, not having acquired that particular turn, cannot enter into them; and ſuch paſſions, though they may be allowed to be almoſt unavoidable in ſome part of life, are always in ſome meaſure ridiculous. This is the caſe with that ſtrong attachment which naturally grows up between two perſons of different ſexes, who have long fixed their thoughts upon one another. Our imanation not having run in the ſame channel with that of the lover, we cannot enter into the eagerneſs of his emotions. If our friend has been injured, we readily ſympathiſe with his reſentment, and grow angry with the very perſon with whom he is angry. If he has received a benefit, we readily enter into his gratitude, and have a very high ſenſe of the merit of his benefactor. But if he is in love, though we may think his paſſion juſt as reaſonable as any of the kind, yet we never think ourſelves bound to conceive a paſſion of the ſame kind, and for the ſame perſon for whom he has conceived it. The paſſion appears to every body, but the man who feels it, entirely diſproportioned to the value of the object; and love, though it is pardoned in a certain age becauſe we know it is natural, is always laughed at, becauſe we cannot enter into it. All ſerious and ſtrong expreſſions of it appear ridiculous to a third perſon; and if the

the lover is not good company to his miſtreſs, he is to no body elſe. He himſelf is ſenſible of this; and as long as he continues in his ſober ſenſes, endeavours to treat his own paſſion with raillery and ridicule. It is the only ſtile in which we care to hear of it; becauſe it is the only ſtile in which we ourſelves are diſpoſed to talk of it. We grow weary of the grave, pedantic, and long-ſentenced love of Cowley and Propertius, who never have done with exaggerating the violence of their attachments; but the gaiety of Ovid, and the gallantry of Horace, are always agreeable.

But though we feel no proper ſympathy with an attachment of this kind, though we never approach even in imagination towards conceiving a paſſion for that particular perſon, yet as we either have conceived, or may be diſpoſed to conceive, paſſions of the ſame kind, we readily enter into thoſe high hopes of happineſs which are propoſed from its gratification, as well as into that exquiſite diſtreſs which is feared from its diſappointment. It intereſts us not as a paſſion, but as a ſituation that gives occaſion to other paſſions which intereſts us; to hope, to fear, and to diſtreſs of every kind: in the ſame manner as in a deſcription of a ſea voyage, it is not the hunger which intereſts us, but the diſtreſs which that hunger occaſions. Though we do not properly enter into the attachment of the lover, we readily go along with thoſe expectations of romantic happineſs which he derives from

from it. We feel how natural it is for the mind, in a certain ſituation, relaxed with indolence, and fatigued with violence of deſire, to long for ſerenity and quiet, to hope to find them in the gratification of that paſſion which diſtracts it, and to frame to itſelf the idea of that life of paſtoral tranquillity and retirement which the elegant, the tender, and the paſſionate Tibullus takes ſo much pleaſure in deſcribing; a life like what the poets deſcribe in the Fortunate Iſlands, a life of friendſhip, liberty, and repoſe; free from labour, and from care, and from all the turbulent paſſions which attend them. Even ſcenes of this kind intereſt us moſt, when they are painted rather as what is hoped, than as what is enjoyed. The groſſneſs of that paſſion, which mixes with, and is, perhaps, the foundation of love, diſappears when its gratification is far off and at a diſtance; but renders the whole offenſive, when deſcribed as what is immediately poſſeſſed. The happy paſſion, upon this account, intereſts us much leſs than the fearful and the melancholy. We tremble for whatever can diſappoint ſuch natural and agreeable hopes: and thus enter into all the anxiety, and concern, and diſtreſs of the lover.

Hence it is, that, in ſome modern tragedies and romances, this paſſion appears ſo wonderfully intereſting. It is not ſo much the love of Caſtalio and Monimia which attaches us in the Orphan, as the diſtreſs which that

love

love occasions. The author who should introduce two lovers, in a scene of perfect security, expressing their mutual fondness for one another, would excite laughter, and not sympathy. If a scene of this kind is ever admitted into a tragedy, it is always, in some measure, improper, and is endured, not from any sympathy with the passion that is expressed in it, but from concern for the dangers and difficulties with which the audience foresee that its gratification is likely to be attended.

The reserve which the laws of society impose upon the fair sex, with regard to this weakness, renders it more peculiarly distressful in them, and, upon that very account, more deeply interesting. We are charmed with the love of Phædra, as it is expressed in the French tragedy of that name, notwithstanding all the extravagance and guilt which attend it. That very extravagance and guilt may be said, in some measure, to recommend it to us. Her fear, her shame, her remorse, her horror, her despair, become thereby more natural and interesting. All the secondary passions, if I may be allowed to call them so, which arise from the situation of love, become necessarily more furious and violent: and it is with these secondary passions only that we can properly be said to sympathize.

Of all the passions, however, which are so extravagantly disproportioned to the value of their objects, love is the only one that appears, even to the weakest minds, to have

any thing in it that is either graceful or agreeable. In itſelf, firſt of all, though it may be ridiculous, it is not naturally odious; and though its conſequences are often fatal and dreadful, its intentions are ſeldom miſchievous. And then, though there is little propriety in the paſſion itſelf, there is a good deal in ſome of thoſe which always accompany it. There is in love a ſtrong mixture of humanity, generoſity, kindneſs, friendſhip, eſteem; paſſions with which, of all others, for reaſons which ſhall be explained immediately, we have the greateſt propenſity to ſympathize, even notwithſtanding we are ſenſible that they are, in ſome meaſure, exceſſive. The ſympathy which we feel with them, renders the paſſion which they accompany leſs diſagreeable, and ſupports it in our imagination, notwithſtanding all the vices which commonly go along with it; though in the one ſex it neceſſarily leads to the laſt ruin and infamy; and though in the other, where it is apprehended to be leaſt fatal, it is almoſt always attended with an incapacity for labour, a neglect of duty, a contempt of fame, and even of common reputation. Notwithſtanding all this, the degree of ſenſibility and generoſity with which it is ſuppoſed to be accompanied, renders it to many the object of vanity; and they are fond of appearing capable of feeling what would do them no honour if they had really felt it.

It is for a reaſon of the ſame kind, that a certain reſerve is neceſſary when we talk of our own friends, our own ſtudies, our own

profeſſions.

professions. All these are objects which we cannot expect should interest our companions in the same degree in which they interest us. And it is for want of this reserve, that the one half of mankind make bad company to the other. A philosopher is company to a philosopher only; the member of a club, to his own little knot of companions.

CHAP. III.

Of the unsocial passions.

THERE is another set of passions, which though derived from the imagination, yet before we can enter into them, or regard them as graceful or becoming, must always be brought down to a pitch much lower than that to which undisciplined nature would raise them. These are hatred and resentment, with all their different modifications. With regard to all such passions, our sympathy is divided between the person who feels them and the person who is the object of them. The interests of these two are directly opposite. What our sympathy with the person who feels them would prompt us to wish for, our fellow-feeling with the other would lead us to fear. As they are both men, we are concerned for both, and our fear for what the one may suffer, damps our resentment for what the other has suffered. Our sympathy,

therefore, with the man who has received the provocation, neceſſarily falls ſhort of the paſſion which naturally animates him, not only upon account of thoſe general cauſes which render all ſympathic paſſions inferior to the original ones, but upon account of that particular cauſe which is peculiar to itſelf, our oppoſite ſympathy with another perſon. Before reſentment, therefore, can become graceful and agreeable, it muſt be more humbled and brought down below that pitch to which it would naturally riſe, than almoſt any other paſſion.

Mankind, at the ſame time, have a very ſtrong ſenſe of the injuries that are done to another. The villain, in a tragedy or romance, is as much the object of our indignation, as the hero is that of our ſympathy and affection. We deteſt Iago as much as we eſteem Othello; and delight as much in the puniſhment of the one, as we are grieved at the diſtreſs of the other. But though mankind have ſo ſtrong a fellow-feeling with the injuries that are done to their brethren, they do not always reſent them the more that the ſufferer appears to reſent them. Upon moſt occaſions, the greater his patience, his mildneſs, his humanity, provided it does not appear that he wants ſpirit, or that fear was the motive of his forbearance, the higher the reſentment againſt the perſon who injured him. The amiableneſs of the character exaſperates their ſenſe of the atrocity of the injury.

Theſe

Theſe paſſions, however, are regarded as neceſſary parts of the character of human nature. A perſon becomes contemptible who tamely ſits ſtill, and ſubmits to inſults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them. We cannot enter into his indifference and inſenſibility: we call his behaviour mean-ſpiritedneſs, and are as really provoked by it, as by the inſolence of his adverſary. Even the mob are enraged to ſee any man ſubmit patiently to affronts and ill uſage. They deſire to ſee this inſolence reſented, and reſented by the perſon who ſuffers from it. They cry to him with fury, to defend, or to revenge himſelf. If his indignation rouſes at laſt, they heartily applaud, and ſympathiſe with it. It enlivens their own indignation againſt his enemy, whom they rejoice to ſee him attack in turn, and are as really gratified by his revenge, provided it is not immoderate, as if the injury had been done to themſelves.

But though the utility of thoſe paſſions to the individual, by rendering it dangerous to inſult or injure him, be acknowledged; and though their utility to the publick, as the guardians of juſtice, and of the equality of its adminiſtration, be not leſs conſiderable, as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter; yet there is ſtill ſomething diſagreeable in the paſſions themſelves, which makes the appearance of them in other men the natural object of our averſion. The expreſſion of anger towards any body preſent, if it exceeds a bare intimation that we are ſenſible of his ill uſage, is re-

garded not only as an insult to that particular person, but as a rudeness to the whole company. Respect for them ought to have restrained us from giving way to so boisterous and offensive an emotion. It is the remote effects of these passions which are agreeable; the immediate effects are mischief to the person against whom they are directed. But it is the immediate, and not the remote effects of objects which render them agreeable or disagreeable to the imagination. A prison is certainly more useful to the publick than a palace; and the person who founds the one is generally directed by a much juster spirit of patriotism, than he who builds the other. But the immediate effects of a prison, the confinement of the wretches shut up in it, are disagreeable; and the imagination either does not take time to trace out the remote ones, or sees them at too great a distance to be much affected by them. A prison, therefore, will always be a disagreeable object; and the fitter it is for the purpose for which it was intended, it will be the more so. A palace, on the contrary, will always be agreeable: yet its remote effects may often be inconvenient to the publick. It may serve to promote luxury, and set the example of the dissolution of manners. Its immediate effects, however, the conveniency, the pleasure and the gaiety of the people who live in it, being all agreeable, and suggesting to the imagination a thousand agreeable ideas, that faculty generally rests upon them, and seldom goes further in tracing its more

more diſtant conſequences. Trophies of the inſtruments of muſick or of agriculture, imitated in painting or in ſtucco, make a common and an agreeable ornament of our halls and dining-rooms. A trophy of the ſame kind, compoſed of the inſtruments of ſurgery, of diſſecting, and amputation-knives; of ſaws for cutting the bones, of trepanning inſtruments, &c. would be abſurd and ſhocking. Inſtruments of ſurgery, however, are always more finely poliſhed, and generally more nicely adapted to the purpoſes for which they are intended, than inſtruments of agriculture. The remote effects of them too, the health of the patient, is agreeable; yet as the immediate effect of them is pain and ſuffering, the ſight of them always diſpleaſes us. Inſtruments of war are agreeable, though their immediate effect may ſeem to be in the ſame manner pain and ſuffering. But then it is the pain and ſuffering of our enemies, with whom we have no ſympathy. With regard to us, they are immediately connected with the agreeable ideas of courage, victory, and honour. They are themſelves, therefore, ſuppoſed to make one of the nobleſt parts of dreſs, and the imitation of them one of the fineſt ornaments of architecture. It is the ſame caſe with the qualities of the mind. The antient ſtoics were of opinion, that as the world was governed by the all-ruling providence of a wiſe, powerful, and good God, every ſingle event ought to be regarded, as making a neceſſary part of the plan of the univerſe, and

as tending to promote the general order and happineſs of the whole: that the vices and follies of mankind, therefore, made as neceſſary a part of this plan as their wiſdom or their virtue; and by that eternal art which educes good from ill, were made to tend equally to the proſperity and perfection of the great ſyſtem of nature. No ſpeculation of this kind, however, how deeply ſoever it might be rooted in the mind, could diminiſh our natural abhorrence for vice, whoſe immediate effects are ſo deſtructive, and whoſe remote ones are too diſtant to be traced by the imagination.

It is the ſame caſe with thoſe paſſions we have been juſt now conſidering. Their immediate effects are ſo diſagreeable, that even when they are moſt juſtly provoked, there is ſtill ſomething about them which diſguſts us. Theſe, therefore, are the only paſſions of which the expreſſions, as I formerly obſerved, do not diſpoſe and prepare us to ſympathize with them, before we are informed of the cauſe which excites them. The plaintive voice of miſery, when heard at a diſtance, will not allow us to be indifferent about the perſon from whom it comes. As ſoon as it ſtrikes our ear, it intereſts us in his fortune, and, if continued, force us almoſt involuntarily to fly to his aſſiſtance. The ſight of a ſmiling countenance, in the ſame manner, elevates even the penſive into that gay and airy mood, which diſpoſes him to ſympathize with, and ſhare the joy which it expreſſes; and

and he feels his heart, which with thought and care was before that ſhrunk and depreſſed, inſtantly expanded and elated. But it is quite otherwiſe with the expreſſions of hatred and reſentment. The hoarſe, boiſterous, and diſcordant voice of anger, when heard at a diſtance, inſpires us either with fear or averſion. We do not fly towards it, as to one who cries out with pain and agony. Women, and men of weak nerves, tremble and are overcome with fear, though ſenſible that themſelves are not the objects of the anger. They conceive fear, however, by putting themſelves in the ſituation of the perſon who is ſo. Even thoſe of ſtouter hearts are diſturbed; not indeed enough to make them afraid, but enough to make them angry; for anger is the paſſion which they would feel in the ſituation of the other perſon. It is the ſame caſe with hatred. Mere expreſſions of ſpite inſpire it againſt no body, but the man who uſes them. Both theſe paſſions are by nature the objects of our averſion. Their diſagreeable and boiſterous appearance never excites, never prepares, and often diſturbs our ſympathy. Grief does not more powerfully engage and attract us to the perſon in whom we obſerve it, than theſe, while we are ignorant of their cauſe, diſguſt and detach us from him. It was, it ſeems, the intention of nature, that thoſe rougher and more unamiable emotions, which drive men from one another, ſhould be leſs eaſily and more rarely communicated.

When

When muſic imitates the modulations of grief or joy, it either actually inſpires us with thoſe paſſions, or at leaſt puts us in the mood which diſpoſes us to conceive them. But when it imitates the notes of anger, it inſpires us with fear. Joy, grief, love, admiration, devotion, are all of them paſſions which are naturally muſical. Their natural tones are all ſoft, clear, and melodious; and they naturally expreſs themſelves in periods which are diſtinguiſhed by regular pauſes, and which upon that account are eaſily adapted to the regular returns of the correſpondent airs of a tune. The voice of anger, on the contrary, and of all the paſſions which are akin to it, is harſh and diſcordant. Its periods too are all irregular, ſometimes very long, and ſometimes very ſhort, and diſtinguiſhed by no regular pauſes. It is with difficulty, therefore, that muſic can imitate any of thoſe paſſions; and the muſic which does imitate them is not the moſt agreeable. A whole entertainment may conſiſt, without any impropriety, of the imitation of the ſocial and agreeable paſſions. It would be a ſtrange entertainment which conſiſted altogether of the imitations of hatred and reſentment.

If thoſe paſſions are diſagreeable to the ſpectator, they are not leſs ſo to the perſon who feels them. Hatred and anger are the greateſt poiſon to the happineſs of a good mind. There is, in the very feeling of thoſe paſſions, ſomething harſh, jarring, and convulſive, ſomething

thing that tears and diſtracts the breaſt, and is altogether deſtructive of that compoſure and tranquillity of mind which is ſo neceſſary to happineſs, and which is beſt promoted by the contrary paſſions of gratitude and love. It is not the value of what they loſe by the perfidy and ingratitude of thoſe they live with, which the generous and humane are moſt apt to regret. Whatever they may have loſt, they can generally be very happy without it. What moſt diſturbs them is the idea of perfidy and ingratitude exerciſed towards themſelves; and the diſcordant and diſagreeable paſſions which this excites, conſtitutes, in their own opinion, the chief part of the injury which they ſuffer.

How many things are requiſite to render the gratification of reſentment compleatly agreeable, and to make the ſpectator thoroughly ſympathize with our revenge? The provocation muſt firſt of all be ſuch that we ſhould become contemptible, and be expoſed to perpetual inſults, if we did not, in ſome meaſure, reſent it. Smaller offences are always better neglected; nor is there any thing more deſpicable than that froward and captious humour which takes fire upon every ſlight occaſion of quarrel. We ſhould reſent more from a ſenſe of the propriety of reſentment, from a ſenſe that mankind expect and require it of us, than becauſe we feel in ourſelves the furies of that diſagreeable paſſion. There is no paſſion, of which the human mind is capable, concerning whoſe juſtneſs we

we ought to be ſo doubtful, concerning whoſe indulgence we ought ſo carefully to conſult our natural ſenſe of propriety, or ſo diligently to conſider what will be the ſentiments of the cool, and impartial ſpectator. Magnanimity, or a regard to maintain our own rank and dignity in ſociety, is the only motive which can enoble the expreſſions of this diſagreeable paſſion. This motive muſt characterize our whole ſtile and deportment. Theſe muſt be plain, open, and direct; determined without poſitiveneſs, and elevated without inſolence; not only free from petulance and low ſcurrility, but generous, candid, and full of all proper regards, even for the perſon who has offended us. It muſt appear, in ſhort, from our whole manner, without our labouring affectedly to expreſs it, that paſſion has not extinguiſhed our humanity; and that if we yield to the dictates of revenge, it is with reluctance, from neceſſity, and in conſequence of great and repeated provocations. When reſentment is guarded and qualified in this manner, it may be admitted to be even generous and noble.

CHAP. IV.

Of the ſocial paſſions.

AS it is a divided ſympathy which renders the whole ſet of paſſions juſt now mentioned, upon moſt occaſions, ſo ungraceful and

and disagreeable; so there is another set opposite to these, which a redoubled sympathy renders almost always peculiarly agreeable and becoming. Generosity, humanity, kindness, compassion, mutual friendship and esteem, all the social and benevolent affections, when expressed in the countenance or behaviour, even towards those who are peculiarly connected with ourselves, please the indifferent spectator upon almost every occasion. His sympathy with the person who feels those passions, exactly coincides with his concern for the person who is the object of them. The interest, which, as a man, he is obliged to take in the happiness of this last, enlivens his fellow-feeling with the sentiments of the other, whose emotions are employed about the same object. We have always, therefore, the strongest disposition to sympathise with the benevolent affections. They appear in every respect agreeable to us. We enter into the satisfaction both of the person who feels them, and of the person who is the object of them. For as to be the object of hatred and indignation gives more pain than all the evil which a brave man can fear from his enemies; so there is a satisfaction in the consciousness of being beloved, which, to a person of delicacy and sensibility, is of more importance to happiness than all the advantage which he can expect to derive from it. What character is so detestable as that of one who takes pleasure to sow dissention among friends, and to turn their most tender love into mortal hatred?

hatred? Yet wherein does the atrocity of this ſo much abhorred injury conſiſt? Is it in depriving them of the frivolous good offices, which, had their friendſhip continued, they might have expected from one another? It is in depriving them of that friendſhip itſelf, in robbing them of each others affections, from which both derived ſo much ſatisfaction; it is in diſturbing the harmony of their hearts, and putting an end to that happy commerce which had before ſubſiſted between them. Theſe affections, that harmony, this commerce, are felt, not only by the tender and the delicate, but by the rudeſt vulgar of mankind, to be of more importance to happineſs than all the little ſervices which could be expected to flow from them.

The ſentiment of love is, in itſelf, agreeable to the perſon who feels it. It ſooths and compoſes the breaſt, ſeems to favour the vital motions, and to promote the healthful ſtate of the human conſtitution; and it is rendered ſtill more delightful by the conſciouſneſs of the gratitude and ſatisfaction which it muſt excite in him who is the object of it. Their mutual regard renders them happy in one another, and ſympathy, with this mutual regard, makes them agreeable to every other perſon. With what pleaſure do we look upon a family, through the whole of which reign mutual love and eſteem, where the parents and children are companions for one another, without any other difference than what is made by reſpectful affection on the one ſide,

and kind indulgence on the other; where freedom and fondness, mutual raillery, and mutual kindness, show that no opposition of interests divides the brothers, nor any rivalship of favour sets the sisters at variance, and where every thing presents us with the idea of peace, chearfulness, harmony, and contentment. On the contrary, how uneasy are we made when we go into a house in which jarring contention sets one half of those who dwell in it against the other; where amidst affected smoothness and complaisance, suspicious looks and sudden starts of passion betray the mutual jealousies which burn within them, and which are every moment ready to burst out through all the restraints which the presence of the company imposes.

Those amiable passions, even when they are acknowledged to be excessive, are never regarded with aversion. There is something agreeable even in the weakness of friendship and humanity. The too tender mother, the too indulgent father, the too generous and affectionate friend, may sometimes, perhaps, on account of the softness of their natures, be looked upon with a species of pity, in which, however, there is a mixture of love, but can never be regarded with hatred and aversion, nor even with contempt, unless by the most brutal and worthless of mankind. It is always with concern, with sympathy and kindness, that we blame them for the extravagance of their attachment. There is a helplessness in the character of extreme humanity

manity which more than any thing interests our pity. There is nothing in itself which renders it either ungraceful or disagreeable. We only regret that it is unfit for the world, because the world is unworthy of it, and because it must expose the person who is endowed with it as a prey to the perfidy and ingratitude of insinuating falshood, and to a thousand pains and uneasinesses, which, of all men, he the least deserves to feel, and which generally too he is, of all men, the least capable of supporting. It is quite otherwise with hatred and resentment. Too violent a propensity to those detestable passions, renders a person the object of universal dread and abhorrence, who, like a wild beast, ought, we think, to be hunted out of all civil society.

CHAP. V.

Of the selfish passions.

BESIDES those two opposite sets of passions, the social and unsocial, there is another which holds a sort of middle place between them; is never either so graceful as is sometimes the one set, nor is ever so odious as is sometimes the other. Grief and joy, when conceived upon account of our own private good or bad fortune, constitute this third set of passions. Even when excessive, they are never so disagreeable as excessive resentment,

ſentment, becauſe no oppoſite ſympathy can ever intereſt us againſt them: and when moſt ſuitable to their objects they are never ſo agreeable as impartial humanity and juſt benevolence; becauſe no double ſympathy can ever intereſt us for them. There is, however, this difference between grief and joy, that we are generally moſt diſpoſed to ſympathiſe with ſmall joys and great ſorrows. The man, who by ſome ſudden revolution of fortune, is lifted up all at once into a condition of life, greatly above what he had formerly lived in, may be aſſured that the congratulations of his beſt friends are not all of them perfectly ſincere. An upſtart, though of the greateſt merit, is generally diſagreeable, and a ſentiment of envy commonly prevents us from heartily ſympathiſing with his joy. If he has any judgment he is ſenſible of this, and inſtead of appearing to be elated with his good fortune, he endeavours, as much as he can, to ſmother his joy, and keep down that elevation of mind with which his new circumſtances naturally inſpire him. He affects the ſame plainneſs of dreſs, and the ſame modeſty of behaviour, which became him in his former ſtation. He redoubles his attention to his old friends, and endeavours more than ever to be humble, aſſiduous, and complaiſant. And this is the behaviour which in his ſituation we moſt approve of; becauſe we expect, it ſeems, that he ſhould have more ſympathy with our envy and averſion to his happineſs, than we have with his happineſs.

It is ſeldom that with all this he ſucceeds. We ſuſpect the ſincerity of his humility, and he grows weary of this conſtraint. In a little time, therefore, he generally leaves all his old friends behind him, ſome of the meaneſt of them excepted, who may, perhaps, condeſcend to become his dependents: nor does he always acquire any new ones; the pride of his new connections is as much affronted at finding him their equal, as that of his old ones had been by his becoming their ſuperior: and it requires the moſt obſtinate and perſevering modeſty to attone for this mortification to either. He generally grows weary too ſoon, and is provoked, by the ſullen and ſuſpicious pride of the one, and by the ſaucy contempt of the other, to treat the firſt with neglect, and the ſecond with petulance, till at laſt he grows habitually inſolent, and forfeits the eſteem of all. If the chief part of human happineſs ariſes from the conſciouſneſs of being beloved, as I believe it does, thoſe ſudden changes of fortune ſeldom contribute much to happineſs. He is happieſt who advances more gradually to greatneſs, whom the public deſtines to every ſtep of his preferment long before he arrives at it, in whom, upon that account, when it comes, it can excite no extravagant joy, and with regard to whom it cannot reaſonably create either any jealouſy in thoſe he overtakes, or any envy in thoſe he leaves behind.

Mankind, however, more readily ſympathiſe with thoſe ſmaller joys which flow from

leſs

leſs important cauſes. It is decent to be humble amidſt great proſperity; but we can ſcarce expreſs too much ſatisfaction in all the little occurrences of common life, in the company with which we ſpent the evening laſt night, in the entertainment that was ſet before us, in what was ſaid and what was done, in all the little incidents of the preſent converſation, and in all thoſe frivolous nothings which fill up the void of human life. Nothing is more graceful than habitual chearfulneſs, which is always founded upon a peculiar reliſh for all the little pleaſures which common occurrences afford. We readily ſympathiſe with it: it inſpires us with the ſame joy, and makes every trifle turn up to us in the ſame agreeable aſpect in which it preſents itſelf to the perſon endowed with this happy diſpoſition. Hence it is that youth, the ſeaſon of gaiety, ſo eaſily engages our affections. That propenſity to joy which ſeems even to animate the bloom, and to ſparkle from the eyes of youth and beauty, though in a perſon of the ſame ſex, exalts, even the aged, to a more joyous mood than ordinary. They forget, for a time, their infirmities, and abandon themſelves to thoſe agreeable ideas and emotions to which they have long been ſtrangers, but which, when the preſence of ſo much happineſs recalls them to their breaſt, take their place there, like old acquaintance, from whom they are ſorry to have ever been parted, and whom they embrace more heartily upon account of this long ſeparation.

It is quite otherwiſe with grief. Small vexations excite no ſympathy, but deep affliction calls forth the greateſt. The man who is made uneaſy by every little diſagreeable incident, who is hurt if either the cook or the butler have failed in the leaſt article of their duty, who feels every defect in the higheſt ceremonial of politeneſs, whether it be ſhewn to himſelf or to any other perſon, who takes it amiſs that his intimate friend did not bid him good-morrow when they met in the forenoon, and that his brother hummed a tune all the time he himſelf was telling a ſtory; who is put out of humour by the badneſs of the weather when in the country, by the badneſs of the roads when upon a journey, and by the want of company, and dullneſs of all public diverſions when in town; ſuch a perſon, I ſay, though he ſhould have ſome reaſon, will ſeldom meet with much ſympathy. Joy is a pleaſant emotion, and we gladly abandon ourſelves to it upon the ſlighteſt occaſion. We readily, therefore, ſympathiſe with it in others, whenever we are not prejudiced by envy. But grief is painful, and the mind, even when it is our own misfortune, naturally reſiſts and recoils from it. We would endeavour either not to conceive it at all, or to ſhake it off as ſoon as we have conceived it. Our averſion to grief will not, indeed, always hinder us from conceiving it in our own caſe upon very trifling occaſions, but it conſtantly prevents us from ſympathiſing with it in others when excited by the like frivolous cauſes: for our

our ſympathetic paſſions are always leſs irreſiſtible than our original ones. There is, beſides, a malice in mankind, which not only prevents all ſympathy with little uneaſineſſes, but renders them in ſome meaſure diverting. Hence the delight which we all take in raillery, and in the ſmall vexation which we obſerve in our companion, when he is puſhed, and urged, and teaſed upon all ſides. Men of the moſt ordinary good-breeding diſſemble the pain which any little incident may give them, and thoſe who are more thoroughly formed to ſociety, turn, of their own accord, all ſuch incidents into raillery, as they know their companions will do for them. The habit which a man, who lives in the world, has acquired of conſidering how every thing that concerns himſelf will appear to others, makes thoſe frivolous calamities turn up in the ſame ridiculous light to him, in which he knows they will certainly be conſidered by them.

Our ſympathy, on the contrary, with deep diſtreſs, is very ſtrong and very ſincere. It is unneceſſary to give an inſtance. We weep even at the feigned repreſentation of a tragedy. If you labour, therefore, under any ſignal calamity, if by ſome extraordinary misfortune you are fallen into poverty, into diſeaſes, into diſgrace and diſappointment; even though your own fault may have been, in part, the occaſion, yet you may generally depend upon the ſincereſt ſympathy of all your friends, and, as far as intereſt and honour will permit,

upon their kindeſt aſſiſtance too. But if your misfortune is not of this dreadful kind, if you have only been a little baulked in your ambition, if you have only been jilted by your miſtreſs, or are only hen-pecked by your wife, lay your account with the raillery of all your acquaintance.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the effects of prosperity and adversity upon the judgment of mankind with regard to the propriety of action; and why it is more easy to obtain their approbation in the one state than in the other.

CHAP. I.

That though our sympathy with sorrow is generally a more lively sensation than our sympathy with joy, it commonly falls much more short of the violence of what is naturally felt by the person principally concerned.

OUR sympathy with sorrow, though not more real, has been more taken notice of than our sympathy with joy. The word sympathy, in its most proper and primitive signification, denotes our fellow-feeling with the sufferings, not that with the enjoyments, of others. A late ingenious and subtile philosopher thought it necessary to prove, by arguments, that we had a real sympathy with joy, and that congratulation was a principle of human nature. No-body, I believe, ever thought it necessary to prove that compassion was such.

First of all, our sympathy with sorrow is, in some sense, more universal than that with joy. Though sorrow is excessive, we may still have some fellow-feeling with it. What we feel does not, indeed, in this case, amount to that compleat sympathy, to that perfect harmony and correspondence of sentiments which constitutes approbation. We do not weep, and exclaim, and lament, with the sufferer. We are sensible, on the contrary, of his weakness and of the extravagance of his passion, and yet often feel a very sensible concern upon his account. But if we do not intirely enter into, and go along with, the joy of another, we have no sort of regard or fellow-feeling for it. The man who skips and dances about with that intemperate and senseless joy which we cannot accompany him in, is the object of our contempt and indignation.

Pain besides, whether of mind or body, is a more pungent sensation than pleasure, and our sympathy with pain, though it falls greatly short of what is naturally felt by the sufferer, is generally a more lively and distinct perception than our sympathy with pleasure, though this last often approaches more nearly, as I shall show immediately, to the natural vivacity of the original passion.

Over and above all this, we often struggle to keep down our sympathy with the sorrow of others. Whenever we are not under the observation of the sufferer, we endeavour, for our own sake, to suppress it as much as we can, and we are not always successful. The opposition

opposition which we make to it, and the reluctance with which we yield to it, necessarily oblige us to take more particular notice of it. But we never have occasion to make this opposition to our sympathy with joy. If there is any envy in the case, we never feel the least propensity towards it; and if there is none, we give way to it without any reluctance. On the contrary, as we are always ashamed of our own envy, we often pretend, and sometimes really wish to sympathise with the joy of others, when by that disagreeable sentiment we are disqualified from doing so. We are glad, we say, on account of our neighbour's good fortune, when in our hearts, perhaps, we are really sorry. We often feel a sympathy with sorrow when we would wish to be rid of it; and we often miss that with joy when we would be glad to have it. The obvious observation, therefore, which it naturally falls in our way to make, is that our propensity to sympathise with sorrow must be very strong, and our inclination to sympathise with joy very weak.

Notwithstanding this prejudice, however, I will venture to affirm, that, when there is no envy in the case, our propensity to sympathise with joy is much stronger than our propensity to sympathise with sorrow; and that our fellow-feeling for the agreeable emotion approaches much more nearly to the vivacity of what is naturally felt by the persons principally concerned, than that which we conceive for the painful one.

We

We have ſome indulgence for that exceſſive grief which we cannot entirely go along with. We know what a prodigious effort is requiſite before the ſufferer can bring down his emotions to compleat harmony and concord with thoſe of the ſpectator. Though he fails, therefore, we eaſily pardon him. But we have no ſuch indulgence for the intemperance of joy; becauſe we are not conſcious that any ſuch vaſt effort is requiſite to bring it down to what we can entirely enter into. The man who, under the greateſt calamities, can command his ſorrow, ſeems worthy of the higheſt admiration; but he who, in the fulneſs of proſperity, can in the ſame manner maſter his joy, ſeems hardly to deſerve any praiſe. We are ſenſible that there is a much wider interval in the one caſe than in the other, between what is naturally felt by the perſon principally concerned, and what the ſpectator can intirely go along with.

What can be added to the happineſs of the man who is in health, who is out of debt, and has a clear conſcience? To one in this ſituation, all acceſſions of fortune may properly be ſaid to be ſuperfluous: and if he is much elevated upon account of them, it muſt be the effect of the moſt frivolous levity. This ſituation, however, may very well be called the natural and ordinary ſtate of mankind. Notwithſtanding the preſent miſery and depravity of the world, ſo juſtly lamented, this really is the ſtate of the greater part of men. The

The greater part of men, therefore, cannot find any great difficulty in elevating themselves to all the joy which any accession to this situation can well excite in their companion.

But though little can be added to this state, much may be taken from it. Though between this condition and the highest pitch of human prosperity, the interval is but a trifle; between it and the lowest depth of misery the distance is immense and prodigious. Adversity, on this account, necessarily depresses the mind of the sufferer much more below its natural state, than prosperity can elevate him above it. The spectator, therefore, must find it much more difficult to sympathise entirely, and keep perfect time, with his sorrow, than thoroughly to enter into his joy, and must depart much further from his own natural and ordinary temper of mind in the one case than in the other. It is on this account, that, though our sympathy with sorrow is often a more pungent sensation than our sympathy with joy, it always falls much more short of the violence of what is naturally felt by the person principally concerned.

It is agreeable to sympathise with joy; and wherever envy does not oppose it, our heart abandons itself with satisfaction to the highest transports of that delightful sentiment. But it is painful to go along with grief, and we always enter into it with reluctance.

luctance *. When we attend to the representation of a tragedy, we struggle against that sympathetic sorrow which the entertainment inspires as long as we can, and we give way to it at last only when we can no longer avoid it: we even then endeavour to cover our concern from the company. If we shed any tears, we carefully conceal them, and are afraid lest the spectators, not entering into this excessive tenderness, should regard it as effeminacy and weakness. The wretch whose misfortunes call upon our compassion feels with what reluctance we are likely to enter into his sorrow, and therefore proposes his grief to us with fear and hesitation: he even smothers the half of it, and is ashamed, upon account of this hard-heartedness of mankind, to give vent to the fulness of his affliction.

* It has been objected to me that as I found the sentiment of approbation, which is always agreeable, upon sympathy, it is inconsistent with my system to admit any disagreeable sympathy. I answer, that in the sentiment of approbation there are two things to be taken notice of; first, the sympathetic passion of the spectator; and, secondly, the emotion which arises from his observing the perfect coincidence between this sympathetic passion in himself, and the original passion in the person principally concerned. This last emotion, in which the sentiment of approbation properly consists, is always agreeable and delightful. The other may either be agreeable or disagreeable, according to the nature of the original passion, whose features it must always, in some measure, retain. Two sounds, I suppose, may, each of them taken singly, be austere, and yet, if they are perfect concords, the perception of their harmony and coincidence may be agreeable.

It

It is otherwise with the man who riots in joy and success. Wherever envy does not interest us against him, he expects our compleatest sympathy. He does not fear, therefore, to enounce himself with shouts of exultation, in full confidence that we are heartily disposed to go along with him.

Why should we be more ashamed to weep than to laugh before company? We may often have as real occasion to do the one as to do the other: but we always feel that the spectators are more likely to go along with us in the agreeable, than in the painful emotion. It is always miserable to complain, even when we are oppressed by the most dreadful calamities. But the triumph of victory is not always ungraceful. Prudence, indeed, would often advise us to bear our prosperity with more moderation; because prudence would teach us to avoid that envy which this very triumph is, more than any thing, apt to excite.

How hearty are the acclamations of the mob, who never bear any envy to their superiors, at a triumph or a public entry? And how sedate and moderate is commonly their grief at an execution? Our sorrow at a funeral generally amounts to no more than an affected gravity; but our mirth at a christening or a marriage, is always from the heart, and without any affectation. Upon these, and all such joyous occasions, our satisfaction, though not so durable, is often as lively as that of the persons principally concerned.

Whenever

Whenever we cordially congratulate our friends, which, however, to the disgrace of human nature, we do but seldom, their joy literally becomes our joy: we are, for the moment, as happy as they are: our heart swells and overflows with real pleasure: joy and complacency sparkle from our eyes, and animate every feature of our countenance, and every gesture of our body.

But, on the contrary, when we condole with our friends in their afflictions, how little do we feel, in comparison of what they feel? We sit down by them, we look at them, and while they relate to us the circumstances of their misfortune, we listen to them with gravity and attention. But while their narration is every moment interrupted by those natural bursts of passion which often seem almost to choak them in the midst of it; how far are the languid emotions of our hearts from keeping time to the transports of theirs? We may be sensible, at the same time, that their passion is natural, and no greater than what we ourselves might feel upon the like occasion. We may even inwardly reproach ourselves with our own want of sensibility, and perhaps, on that account, work ourselves up into an artificial sympathy, which, however, when it is raised, is always the slightest and most transitory imaginable; and generally, as soon as we have left the room, vanishes, and is gone forever. Nature, it seems, when she loaded us with our own sorrows, thought that they were enough, and therefore did

did not command us to take any further ſhare in thoſe of others, than what was neceſſary to prompt us to relieve them.

It is on account of this dull ſenſibility to the afflictions of others, that magnanimity amidſt great diſtreſs appears always ſo divinely graceful. His behaviour is genteel and agreeable who can maintain his chearfulneſs amidſt a number of frivolous diſaſters. But he appears to be more than mortal who can ſupport in the ſame manner the moſt dreadful calamities. We feel what an immenſe effort is requiſite to ſilence thoſe violent emotions which naturally agitate and diſtract thoſe in his ſituation. We are amazed to find that he can command himſelf ſo intirely. His firmneſs, at the ſame time, perfectly coincides with our inſenſibility. He makes no demand upon us for that more exquiſite degree of ſenſibility which we find, and which we are mortified to find, that we do not poſſeſs. There is the moſt perfect correſpondence between his ſentiments and ours, and on that account the moſt perfect propriety in his behaviour. It is a propriety too, which, from our experience of the uſual weakneſs of human nature, we could not reaſonably have expected he ſhould be able to maintain. We wonder with ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment at that ſtrength of mind which is capable of ſo noble and generous an effort. The ſentiment of compleat ſympathy and approbation, mixed and animated with wonder and ſurpriſe, conſtitutes what is properly called admiration,

as

as has already been more than once taken notice of. Cato, surrounded on all sides by his enemies, unable to resist them, disdaining to submit to them, and reduced, by the proud maxims of that age, to the necessity of destroying himself; yet never shrinking from his misfortunes, never supplicating with the lamentable voice of wretchedness, those miserable sympathetic tears which we are always so unwilling to give; but on the contrary, arming himself with manly fortitude, and the moment before he executes his fatal resolution, giving, with his usual tranquillity, all necessary orders for the safety of his friends; appears to Seneca, that great preacher of insensibility, a spectacle which even the gods themselves might behold with pleasure and admiration.

Whenever we meet, in common life, with any examples of such heroic magnanimity, we are always extremely affected. We are more apt to weep and shed tears for such as, in this manner, seem to feel nothing for themselves, than for those who give way to all the weakness of sorrow: and in this particular case, the sympathetic grief of the spectator appears to go beyond the original passion in the person principally concerned. The friends of Socrates all wept when he drank the last potion, while he himself expressed the gaiest and most chearful tranquillity. Upon all such occasions the spectator makes no effort, and has no occasion to make any, in order to conquer his sympathetic sorrow. He is under

der no fear that it will transport him to any thing that is extravagant and improper; he is rather pleased with the sensibility of his own heart, and gives way to it with complacence and self-approbation. He gladly indulges, therefore, the most melancholy views which can naturally occur to him, concerning the calamity of his friend, for whom, perhaps, he never felt so exquisitely before, the tender and tearful passion of love. But it is quite otherwise with the person principally concerned. He is obliged, as much as possible, to turn away his eyes from whatever is either naturally terrible or disagreeable in his situation. Too serious an attention to those circumstances, he fears, might make so violent an impression upon him, that he could no longer keep within the bounds of moderation, or render himself the object of the compleat sympathy and approbation of the spectators. He fixes his thoughts, therefore, upon those only which are agreeable, the applause and admiration which he is about to deserve by the heroic magnanimity of his behaviour. To feel that he is capable of so noble and generous an effort, to feel that in this dreadful situation he can still act as he would desire to act, animates and transports him with joy, and enables him to support that triumphant gaiety which seems to exult in the victory he thus gains over his misfortunes.

On the contrary, he always appears, in some measure, mean and despicable, who is

ſunk in ſorrow and dejection upon account of any calamity of his own. We cannot bring ourſelves to feel for him what he feels for himſelf, and what, perhaps, we ſhould feel for ourſelves if in his ſituation: we, therefore, deſpiſe him; unjuſtly, perhaps, if any ſentiment could be regarded as unjuſt, to which we are by nature irreſiſtibly determined. The weakneſs of ſorrow never appears in any reſpect agreeable, except when it ariſes from what we feel for others more than from what we feel for ourſelves. A ſon, upon the death of an indulgent and reſpectable father, may give way to it without much blame. His ſorrow is chiefly founded upon a ſort of ſympathy with his departed parent; and we readily enter into this humane emotion. But if he ſhould indulge the ſame weakneſs upon account of any misfortune which affected himſelf only, he would no longer meet with any ſuch indulgence. If he ſhould be reduced to beggary and ruin, if he ſhould be expoſed to the moſt dreadful dangers, if he ſhould even be led out to a public execution, and there ſhed one ſingle tear upon the ſcaffold, he would diſgrace himſelf for ever in the opinion of all the gallant and generous part of mankind. Their compaſſion for him, however, would be very ſtrong, and very ſincere; but as it would ſtill fall ſhort of this exceſſive weakneſs, they would have no pardon for the man who could thus expoſe himſelf in the eyes of the world. His behaviour would affect them with ſhame rather than with ſorrow;

row; and the dishonour which he had thus brought upon himself would appear to them the most lamentable circumstance in his misfortune. How did it disgrace the memory of the intrepid Duke of Biron, who had so often braved death in the field, that he wept upon the scaffold, when he beheld the state to which he was fallen, and remembered the favour and the glory from which his own rashness had so unfortunately thrown him.

CHAP. II.

Of the origin of ambition, and of the distinction of ranks.

IT is because mankind are disposed to sympathise more entirely with our joy than with our sorrow, that we make parade of our riches, and conceal our poverty. Nothing is so mortifying as to be obliged to expose our distress to the view of the public, and to feel, that though our situation is open to the eyes of all mankind, no mortal conceives for us the half of what we suffer. Nay, it is chiefly from this regard to the sentiments of mankind, that we pursue riches and avoid poverty. For to what purpose is all the toil and bustle of this world? what is the end of avarice and ambition, of the pursuit of wealth, of power, and preheminence? Is it to supply the necessities of nature? The

wages of the meaneſt labourer can ſupply them. We ſee that they afford him food and cloathing, the comfort of a houſe, and of a family. If we examine his œconomy with rigor, we ſhould find that he ſpends a great part of them upon conveniencies, which may be regarded as ſuperfluities, and that, upon extraordinary occaſions, he can give ſomething even to vanity and diſtinction. What then is the cauſe of our averſion to his ſituation, and why ſhould thoſe who have been educated in the higher ranks of life, regard it as worſe than death, to be reduced to live, even without labour, upon the ſame ſimple fare with him, to dwell under the ſame lowly roof, and to be cloathed in the ſame humble attire? Do they imagine that their ſtomach is better, or their ſleep ſounder in a palace than in a cottage? The contrary has been ſo often obſerved, and, indeed, is ſo very obvious, though it had never been obſerved, that there is no body ignorant of it. From whence, then, ariſes that emulation which runs through all the different ranks of men, and what are the advantages which we propoſe by that great purpoſe of human life which we call bettering our condition? To be obſerved, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with ſympathy, complacency and approbation, are all the advantages which we can propoſe to derive from it. It is the vanity, not the eaſe, or the pleaſure, which intereſts us. But vanity is always founded upon the belief of our being the object of attention and approbation.

tion. The rich man glories in his riches, becauſe he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are diſpoſed to go along with him in all thoſe agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his ſituation ſo readily inſpire him. At the thought of this, his heart ſeems to ſwell and dilate itſelf within him, and he is fonder of his wealth, upon this account, than for all the other advantages it procures him. The poor man, on the contrary, is aſhamed of his poverty. He feels that it either places him out of the ſight of mankind, or, that if they take any notice of him, they have, however, ſcarce any fellow-feeling with the miſery and diſtreſs which he ſuffers. He is mortified upon both accounts; for though to be overlooked, and to be diſapproved of, are things entirely different, yet as obſcurity covers us from the daylight of honour and approbation, to feel that we are taken no notice of, neceſſarily damps the moſt agreeable hope, and diſappoints the moſt ardent deſire, of human nature. The poor man goes out and comes in unheeded, and when in the midſt of a croud is in the ſame obſcurity as if ſhut up in his own hovel. Thoſe humble cares and painful attentions which occupy thoſe in his ſituation, afford no amuſement to the diſſipated and the gay. They turn away their eyes from him, or if the extremity of his diſtreſs forces them to look at him, it is only to ſpurn ſo diſagreeable an object from among them. The fortunate and the proud won-

der at the insolence of human wretchedness, that it should dare to present itself before them, and with the loathsome aspect of its misery, presume to disturb the serenity of their happiness. The man of rank and distinction, on the contrary, is observed by all the world. Every body is eager to look at him, and to conceive, at least by sympathy, that joy and exultation with which his circumstances naturally inspire him. His actions are the objects of the public care. Scarce a word, scarce a gesture, can fall from him that is altogether neglected. In a great assembly he is the person upon whom all direct their eyes; it is upon him that their passions seem all to wait with expectation, in order to receive that movement and direction which he shall impress upon them; and if his behaviour is not altogether absurd, he has, every moment, an opportunity of interesting mankind, and of rendering himself the object of the observation and fellow-feeling of every body about him. It is this, which notwithstanding the restraint it imposes, notwithstanding the loss of liberty with which it is attended, renders greatness the object of envy, and compensates, in the opinion of mankind, all that toil, all that anxiety, all those mortifications which must be undergone in the pursuit of it; and what is of yet more consequence, all that leisure, all that ease, all that careless security, which are forfeited for ever by the acquisition.

When

When we consider the condition of the great, in those delusive colours in which the imagination is apt to paint it, it seems to be almost the abstract idea of a perfect and happy state. It is the very state which, in all our waking dreams and idle reveries, we had sketched out to ourselves as the final object of all our desires. We feel, therefore, a peculiar sympathy with the satisfaction of those who are in it. We favour all their inclinations, and forward all their wishes. What pity, we think, that any thing should spoil and corrupt so agreeable a situation! We could even wish them immortal; and it seems hard to us, that death should at last put an end to such perfect enjoyment. It is cruel, we think, in nature, to compel them from their exalted stations, to that humble, but hospitable home, which she has provided for all her children. Great King, live for ever! is the compliment, which, after the manner of eastern adulation, we should readily make them, if experience did not teach us its absurdity. Every calamity that befals them, every injury that is done them, excites in the breast of the spectator ten times more compassion and resentment than he would have felt, had the same things happened to other men. It is the misfortunes of Kings only which afford the proper subjects for tragedy. They resemble, in this respect, the misfortunes of lovers. Those two situations are the chief which interest us upon the theatre; because, in spite of all that reason and experience

rience can tell us to the contrary, the prejudices of the imagination attach to these two states a happiness superior to any other. To disturb, or to put an end to such perfect enjoyment, seems to be the most atrocious of all injuries. The traitor who conspires against the life of his monarch, is thought a greater monster than any other murderer. All the innocent blood that was shed in the civil wars, provoked less indignation than the death of Charles I. A stranger to human nature, who saw the indifference of men about the misery of their inferiors, and the regret and indignation which they feel for the misfortunes and sufferings of those above them, would be apt to imagine, that pain must be more agonizing, and the convulsions of death more terrible to persons of high rank, than to those of meaner stations.

Upon this disposition of mankind, to go along with all the passions of the rich and the powerful, is founded the distinction of ranks, and the order of society. Our obsequiousness to our superiors more frequently arises from our admiration for the advantages of their situation, than from any private expectations of benefit from their good-will. Their benefits can extend but to a few; but their fortunes interest almost every body. We are eager to assist them in compleating a system of happiness that approaches so near to perfection; and we desire to serve them for their own sake, without any other recompence but the vanity or the honour of obliging them.

Neither

Neither is our deference to their inclinations founded chiefly, or altogether, upon a regard to the utility of ſuch ſubmiſſion, and to the order of ſociety, which is beſt ſupported by it. Even when the order of ſociety ſeems to require that we ſhould oppoſe them, we can hardly bring ourſelves to do it. That kings are the ſervants of the people, to be obeyed, reſiſted, depoſed, or puniſhed, as the public conveniency may require, is the doctrine of reaſon and philoſophy; but it is not the doctrine of nature. Nature would teach us to ſubmit to them, for their own ſake, to tremble and bow down before their exalted ſtation, to regard their ſmile as a reward ſufficient to compenſate any ſervices, and to dread their diſpleaſure, though no other evil was to follow from it, as the ſevereſt of all mortifications. To treat them in any reſpect as men, to reaſon and diſpute with them upon ordinary occaſions, requires ſuch reſolution, that there are few men whoſe magnanimity can ſupport them in it, unleſs they are likewiſe aſſiſted by familiarity and acquaintance. The ſtrongeſt motives, the moſt furious paſſions, fear, hatred and reſentment, are ſcarce ſufficient to balance this natural diſpoſition to reſpect them: and their conduct muſt, either juſtly or unjuſtly, have excited the higheſt degree of all thoſe paſſions, before the bulk of the people can be brought to oppoſe them with violence, or to deſire to ſee them either puniſhed or depoſed. Even when the people have been brought this length,

they

they are apt to relent every moment, and easily relapse into their habitual state of deference to those whom they have been accustomed to look upon as their natural superiors. They cannot stand the mortification of their monarch. Compassion soon takes the place of resentment, they forget all past provocations, their old principles of loyalty revive, and they run to re-establish the ruined authority of their old masters, with the same violence with which they had opposed it. The death of Charles I. brought about the Restoration of the royal family. Compassion for James II. when he was seized by the populace in making his escape on ship-board, had almost prevented the revolution, and made it go on more heavily than before.

Do the great seem insensible of the easy price at which they may acquire the public admiration; or do they seem to imagine that to them, as to other men, it must be the purchase either of sweat or of blood? By what important accomplishments is the young nobleman instructed to support the dignity of his rank, and to render himself worthy of that superiority over his fellow citizens, to which the virtue of his ancestors had raised them? Is it by knowledge, by industry, by patience, by self-denial, or by virtue of any kind? As all his words, as all his motions are attended to, he learns an habitual regard to every circumstance of ordinary behaviour, and studies to perform all those small duties with the most exact propriety. As he is conscious

conſcious how much he is obſerved, and how much mankind are diſpoſed to favour all his inclinations, he acts, upon the moſt indifferent occaſions, with that freedom and elevation which the thought of this naturally inſpires. His air, his manner, his deportment, all mark that elegant and graceful ſenſe of his own ſuperiority, which thoſe who are born to inferior ſtations can hardly ever arrive at: theſe are the arts by which he propoſes to make manknd more eaſily ſubmit to his authority, and to govern their inclinations according to his own pleaſure: and in this he is ſeldom diſappointed. Theſe arts, ſupported by rank and preheminence, are, upon ordinary occaſions, ſufficient to govern the world. Lewis XIV. during the greater part of his reign, was regarded, not only in France, but over all Europe, as the moſt perfect model of a great prince. But what were the talents and virtues by which he acquired this great reputation? Was it by the ſcrupulous and inflexible juſtice of all his undertakings, by the immenſe dangers and difficulties with which they were attended, or by the unwearied and unrelenting application with which he purſued them? Was it by his extenſive knowledge, by his exquiſite judgment, or by his heroic valour? It was by none of theſe qualities. But he was, firſt of all, the moſt powerful prince in Europe, and conſequently held the higheſt rank among kings; and then, ſays his hiſtorian, "he ſurpaſſed all his courtiers in the gracefulneſs of his ſhape, and "the

" the majeſtic beauty of his features. The
" ſound of his voice, noble and affecting,
" gained thoſe hearts which his preſence in-
" timidated. He had a ſtep and a deport-
" ment which could ſuit only him and his
" rank, and which would have been ridi-
" culous in any other perſon. The emba-
" raſſment which he occaſioned to thoſe who
" ſpoke to him, flattered that ſecret ſatiſ-
" faction with which he felt his own ſupe-
" riority. The old officer, who was con-
" founded and faultered in aſking him a fa-
" vour, and not being able to conclude his
" diſcourſe, ſaid to him: Sir, your majeſty,
" I hope, will believe that I do not tremble
" thus before your enemies: had no diffi-
" culty to obtain what he demanded." Theſe frivolous accompliſhments, ſupported by his rank, and, no doubt too, by a degree of other talents and virtues, which ſeems, however, not to have been much above mediocrity, eſtabliſhed this prince in the eſteem of his own age, and have drawn, even from poſterity, a good deal of reſpect for his memory. Compared with theſe, in his own times, and in his own preſence, no other virtue, it ſeems, appeared to have any merit. Knowledge, induſtry, valour and beneficence, trembled, were abaſhed, and loſt all dignity before them.

But it is not by accompliſhments of this kind, that the man of inferior rank muſt hope to diſtinguiſh himſelf. Politeneſs is ſo much the virtue of the great, that it will do little

little honour to any body but themſelves. The coxcomb, who imitates their manner, and affects to be eminent by the ſuperior propriety of his ordinary behaviour, is rewarded with a double ſhare of contempt for his folly and preſumption. Why ſhould the man, whom nobody thinks it worth while to look at, be very anxious about the manner in which he holds up his head, or diſpoſes of his arms while he walks through a room? He is occupied ſurely with a very ſuperfluous attention, and with an attention too that marks a ſenſe of his own importance, which no other mortal can go along with. The moſt perfect modeſty and plainneſs, joined to as much negligence as is conſiſtent with the reſpect due to the company, ought to be the chief characteriſtics of the behaviour of a private man. If ever he hopes to diſtinguiſh himſelf, it muſt be by more important virtues. He muſt acquire dependants to balance the dependants of the great, and he has no other fund to pay them from, but the labour of his body, and the activity of his mind. He muſt cultivate theſe therefore: he muſt acquire ſuperior knowledge in his profeſſion, and ſuperior induſtry in the exerciſe of it. He muſt be patient in labour, reſolute in danger, and firm in diſtreſs. Theſe talents he muſt bring into public view, by the difficulty, importance, and, at the ſame time, good judgment of his undertakings, and by the ſevere and unrelenting application with which he purſues them. Probity and prudence, generoſity

rosity and frankness, must characterise his behaviour upon all ordinary occasions; and he must, at the same time, be forward to engage in all those situations, in which it requires the greatest talents and virtues to act with propriety, but in which the greatest applause is to be acquired by those who can acquit themselves with honour. With what impatience does the man of spirit and ambition, who is depressed by his situation, look round for some great opportunity to distinguish himself? No circumstances, which can afford this, appear to him undesireable. He even looks forward with satisfaction to the prospect of foreign war, or civil dissension; and, with secret transport and delight, sees through all the confusion and bloodshed which attend them, the probability of those wished for occasions presenting themselves, in which he may draw upon himself the attention and admiration of mankind. The man of rank and distinction, on the contrary, whose whole glory consists in the propriety of his ordinary behaviour, who is contented with the humble renown which this can afford him, and has no talents to acquire any other, is unwilling to embarass himself with what can be attended either with difficulty or distress. To figure at a ball is his great triumph, and to succeed in an intrigue of gallantry, his highest exploit. He has an aversion to all publick confusions, not from the love of mankind, for the great never look upon their inferiors as their fellow-creatures; nor yet from want of

of courage, for in that he is ſeldom defective; but from a conſciouſneſs that he poſſeſſes none of the virtues which are required in ſuch ſituations, and that the publick attention will certainly be drawn away from him by others. He may be willing to expoſe himſelf to ſome little danger, and to make a campaign when it happens to be the faſhion. But he ſhudders with horror at the thought of any ſituation which demands the continual and long exertion of patience, induſtry, fortitude, and application of thought. Theſe virtues are hardly ever to be met with in men who are born to thoſe high ſtations. In all governments accordingly, even in monarchies, the higheſt offices are generally poſſeſſed, and the whole detail of the adminiſtration conducted by men who were educated in the middle and inferior ranks of life, who have been carried forward by their own induſtry and abilities, though loaded with the jealouſy, and oppoſed by the reſentment of all thoſe who were born their ſuperiors, and to whom the great, after having regarded them firſt with contempt, and afterwards with envy, are at laſt contented to truckle with the ſame abject meanneſs with which they deſire that the reſt of mankind ſhould behave to themſelves.

It is the loſs of this eaſy empire over the affections of mankind which renders the fall from greatneſs ſo inſupportable. When the family of the King of Macedon was led in triumph by Paulus Æmilius, their misfortunes,

tunes, it is ſaid, made them divide with their conqueror the attention of the Roman people. The ſight of the royal children, whoſe tender age rendered them inſenſible of their ſituation, ſtruck the ſpectators, amidſt the public rejoicings and proſperity, with the tendereſt ſorrow and compaſſion. The King appeared next in the proceſſion; and ſeemed like one confounded and aſtoniſhed, and bereft of all ſentiment, by the greatneſs of his calamities. His friends and miniſters followed after him. As they moved along, they often caſt their eyes upon their fallen ſovereign, and always burſt into tears at the ſight; their whole behaviour demonſtrating that they thought not of their own misfortunes, but were occupied entirely by the ſuperior greatneſs of his. The generous Romans, on the contrary, beheld him with diſdain and indignation, and regarded as unworthy of all compaſſion the man who could be ſo mean-ſpirited as to bear to live under ſuch calamities. Yet what did thoſe calamities amount to? According to the greater part of hiſtorians, he was to ſpend the remainder of his days, under the protection of a powerful and humane people, in a ſtate which in itſelf ſhould ſeem worthy of envy, a ſtate of plenty, eaſe, leiſure, and ſecurity, from which it was impoſſible for him even by his own folly to fall. But he was no longer to be ſurrounded by that admiring mob of fools, flatterers, and dependants, who had formerly been accuſtomed to attend upon all his motions. He was

was no longer to be gazed upon by multitudes, nor to have it in his power to render himſelf the object of their reſpect, their gratitude, their love, their admiration. The paſſions of nations were no longer to mould themſelves upon his inclinations. This was that inſupportable calamity which bereaved the King of all ſentiment; which made his friends forget their own misfortunes; and which the Roman magnanimity could ſcarce conceive how any man could be ſo mean-ſpirited as to bear to ſurvive.

"Love, ſays my Lord Rochfaucault, is "commonly ſucceeded by ambition; but "ambition is hardly ever ſucceeded by love." That paſſion, when once it has got intire poſſeſſion of the breaſt, will admit neither a rival nor a ſucceſſor. To thoſe who have been accuſtomed to the poſſeſſion, or even to the hope of public admiration, all other pleaſures ſicken and decay. Of all the diſcarded ſtateſmen who for their own eaſe have ſtudied to get the better of ambition, and to deſpiſe thoſe honours which they could no longer arrive at, how few have been able to ſucceed? The greater part have ſpent their time in the moſt liſtleſs and inſipid indolence, chagrined at the thoughts of their own inſignificancy, incapable of being intereſted in the occupations of private life, without enjoyment except when they talked of their former greatneſs, and without ſatisfaction except when they were employed in ſome vain project to recover it. Are you in earneſt reſolved

never to barter your liberty for the lordly ſervitude of a Court, but to live free, fearleſs, and independant? There ſeems to be one way to continue in that virtuous reſolution; and perhaps but one. Never enter the place from whence ſo few have been able to return; never come within the circle of ambition; nor ever bring yourſelf into compariſon with thoſe maſters of the earth who have already engroſſed the attention of half mankind before you.

Of ſuch mighty importance does it appear to be, in the imaginations of men, to ſtand in that ſituation which ſets them moſt in the view of general ſympathy and attention. And thus, place, that great object which divides the wives of aldermen, is the end of half the labours of human life; and is the cauſe of all the tumult and buſtle, all the rapine and injuſtice, which avarice and ambition have introduced into this world. People of ſenſe, it is ſaid, indeed deſpiſe place; that is, they deſpiſe ſitting at the head of the table, and are indifferent who it is that is pointed out to the company by that frivolous circumſtance, which the ſmalleſt advantage is capable of overbalancing. But rank, diſtinction, preeminence, no man deſpiſes, unleſs he is either raiſed very much above, or ſunk very much below, the ordinary ſtandard of human nature; unleſs he is either ſo confirmed in wiſdom and real philoſophy, as to be ſatisfied that, while the propriety of his conduct renders him the juſt object of approbation, it is of little

little consequence though he be neither attended to, nor approved of; or so habituated to the idea of his own meanness, so sunk in slothful and sottish indifference, as intirely to have forgot the desire, and almost the very wish, for superiority.

CHAP. III.

Of the stoical philosophy.

WHEN we examine in this manner into the ground of the different degrees of estimation which mankind are apt to bestow upon the different conditions of life, we shall find, that the excessive preference, which they generally give to some of them above others, is in a great measure without any foundation. If to be able to act with propriety, and to render ourselves the proper objects of the approbation of mankind, be, as we have been endeavouring to show, what chiefly recommends to us one condition above another, this may equally be attained in them all. The noblest propriety of conduct may be supported in adversity, as well as in prosperity; and though it is somewhat more difficult in the first, it is upon that very account more admirable. Perils and misfortunes are not only the proper school of heroism, they are the only proper theatre which can exhibit its virtue to advantage, and draw upon it the full applause of the world. The man, whose

whole life has been one even and uninterrupted course of prosperity, who never braved any danger, who never encountered any difficulty, who never surmounted any distress, can excite but an inferior degree of admiration. When poets and romance-writers endeavour to invent a train of adventures, which shall give the greatest lustre to those characters for whom they mean to interest us, they are all of a different kind. They are rapid and sudden changes of fortune, situations the most apt to drive those who are in them to frenzy and distraction, or to abject despair; but in which their heroes act with so much propriety, or at least with so much spirit and undaunted resolution, as still to command our esteem. Is not the unfortunate magnanimity of Cato, Brutus, and Leonidas, as much the object of admiration, as that of the successful Cæsar or Alexander? To a generous mind, therefore, ought it not to be as much the object of envy? If a more dazzling splendor seems to attend the fortunes of successful conquerors, it is because they join together the advantages of both situations, the lustre of prosperity to the high admiration which is excited by dangers encountered, and difficulties surmounted, with intrepidity and valour.

It was upon this account that, according to the stoical philosophy, to a wise man all the different conditions of life were equal. Nature, they said, had recommended some objects to our choice, and others to our disapprobation.

approbation. Our primary appetites directed us to the purſuit of health, ſtrength, eaſe, and perfection, in all the qualities of mind and body; and of whatever could promote or ſecure theſe, riches, power, authority: and the ſame original principle taught us to avoid the contrary. But in chuſing or rejecting, in preferring or poſtponing, thoſe firſt objects of original appetite and averſion, nature had likewiſe taught us, that there was a certain order, propriety, and grace, to be obſerved, of infinitely greater conſequence to happineſs and perfection, than the attainment of thoſe objects themſelves. The objects of our primary appetites or averſions were to be purſued or avoided, chiefly becauſe a regard to this grace and propriety required ſuch conduct. In directing all our actions according to theſe, conſiſted the happineſs and glory of human nature. In departing from thoſe rules which they preſcribed to us, its greateſt wretchedneſs and moſt compleat depravity. The outward appearance of this order and propriety was indeed more eaſily maintained in ſome circumſtances than in others. To a fool, however, to one whoſe paſſions were ſubjected to no proper controul, to act with real grace and propriety, was equally impoſſible in every ſituation. Though the giddy multitude might admire him, though his vanity might ſometimes be elated by their ignorant praiſes into ſomething that reſembled ſelf-approbation, yet ſtill when he turned his view to what paſſed within his own breaſt, he was

ſecretly conſcious to himſelf of the abſurdity and meanneſs of all his motives, and inwardly bluſhed and trembled at the thoughts of the contempt which he knew he deſerved, and which mankind would certainly beſtow upon him if they ſaw his conduct in the light in which in his own heart he was obliged to regard it. To a wiſe man, on the contrary, to one whoſe paſſions were all brought under perfect ſubjection to the ruling principles of his nature, to reaſon and the love of propriety, to act ſo as to deſerve approbation was equally eaſy upon all occaſions. Was he in proſperity, he returned thanks to Jupiter for having joined him with circumſtances which were eaſily maſtered, and in which there was little temptation to do wrong. Was he in adverſity, he equally returned thanks to the director of this ſpectacle of human life, for having oppoſed to him a vigorous athlete, over whom, though the conteſt was likely to be more violent, the victory was more glorious, and equally certain. Can there be any ſhame in that diſtreſs which is brought upon us without any fault of our own, and in which we behave with perfect propriety? There can, therefore, be no evil, but, on the contrary, the greateſt good and advantage. A brave man exults in thoſe dangers, in which, from no raſhneſs of his own, his fortune has involved him. They afford an opportunity of exerciſing that heroic intrepidity, whoſe exertion gives the exalted delight which flows from the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior propriety and

and deſerved admiration. One who is maſter of all his exerciſes has no averſion to meaſure his ſtrength and activity with the ſtrongeſt. And in the ſame manner, one who is maſter of all his paſſions, does not dread any circumſtances in which the ſuperintendent of the univerſe may think proper to place him. The bounty of that divine being has provided him with virtues which render him ſuperior to every ſituation. If it is pleaſure, he has temperance to refrain from it; if it is pain, he has conſtancy to bear it; if it is danger or death, he has magnanimity and fortitude to deſpiſe it. He never complains of the deſtiny of providence, nor thinks the univerſe in confuſion when he is out of order. He does not look upon himſelf, according to what ſelf-love would ſuggeſt, as a whole, ſeparated and detached from every other part of nature, to be taken care of by itſelf, and for itſelf. He regards himſelf in the light in which he imagines the great Genius of human nature, and of the world regards him. He enters, if I may ſay ſo, into the ſentiments of that Divine Being, and conſiders himſelf as an atom, a particle, of an immenſe and infinite ſyſtem, which muſt, and ought to be diſpoſed of, according to the conveniency of the whole. Aſſured of the wiſdom which directs all the events of human life, whatever lot befalls him, he accepts it with joy, ſatisfied that, if he had known all the connexions and dependencies of the different

parts of the univerſe, it is the very lot which he himſelf would have wiſhed for. If it is life, he is contented to live: and if it is death, as nature muſt have no further occaſion for his preſence here, he willingly goes where he is appointed. I accept, ſaid a ſtoical philoſopher, with equal joy and ſatisfaction, whatever fortune can befal me. Riches or poverty, pleaſure or pain, health or ſickneſs, all is alike: nor would I deſire that the Gods ſhould in any reſpect change my deſtination. If I was to aſk of them any thing, beyond what their bounty has already beſtowed, it ſhould be that they would inform me beforehand what it was their pleaſure ſhould be done with me, that I might of my own accord place myſelf in this ſituation, and demonſtrate the chearfulneſs with which I embraced their allotment. If I am going to ſail, ſays Epictetus, I chuſe the beſt ſhip, and the beſt pilot, and I wait for the faireſt weather that my circumſtances and duty will allow. Prudence and propriety, the principles which the Gods have given me for the direction of my conduct, require this of me; but they require no more: and if, notwithſtanding, a ſtorm ariſes, which neither the ſtrength of the veſſel, nor the ſkill of the pilot are likely to withſtand, I give myſelf no trouble about the conſequence. All that I had to do, is done already. The directors of my conduct never command me to be miſerable, to be anxious, deſponding, or afraid. Whether we are

are to be drowned, or to come to a harbour, is the business of Jupiter, not mine. I leave it intirely to his determination, nor ever break my rest with considering which way he is likely to decide it, but receive whatever comes with equal indifference and security.

Such was the philosophy of the stoics; a philosophy which affords the noblest lessons of magnanimity, is the best school of heroes and patriots, and to the greater part of whose precepts there can be no other objection, except that honourable one, that they teach us to aim at a perfection altogether beyond the reach of human nature. I shall not at present stop to examine it. I shall only observe, in confirmation of what has formerly been said, that the most dreadful calamities are not always those which it is most difficult to support. It is often more mortifying to appear in publick, under small disasters, than under great misfortunes. The first excite no sympathy; but the second, though they may excite none that approaches to the anguish of the sufferer, call forth, however, a very lively compassion. The sentiments of the spectators are, in this last case, therefore, less wide of those of the sufferer, and their imperfect fellow-feeling lends him some assistance in supporting his misery. Before a gay assembly, a gentleman would be more mortified to appear covered with filth and rags than with blood and wounds. This last situation would interest their pity; the other would provoke their

their laughter. The judge who orders a criminal to be ſet in the pillory, diſhonours him more than if he had condemned him to the ſcaffold. The great prince, who, ſome years ago, caned a general officer at the head of his army, diſgraced him irrecoverably. The puniſhment would have been much leſs had he ſhot him through the body. By the laws of honour, to ſtrike with a cane diſhonours, to ſtrike with a ſword does not, for an obvious reaſon. Thoſe ſlighter puniſhments, when inflicted on a gentleman, to whom diſhonour is the greateſt of all evils, come to be regarded among a humane and generous people, as the moſt dreadful of any. With regard to perſons of that rank, therefore, they are univerſally laid aſide, and the law, while it takes their life upon many occaſions, reſpects their honour upon almoſt all. To ſcourge a perſon of quality, or to ſet him in the pillory, upon account of any crime whatever, is a brutality of which no European government, except that of Ruſſia, is capable.

A brave man is not rendered contemptible by being brought to the ſcaffold; he is, by being ſet in the pillory. His behaviour in the one ſituation may gain him univerſal eſteem and admiration. No behaviour in the other can render him agreeable. The ſympathy of the ſpectators ſupports him in the one caſe, and ſaves him from that ſhame, that conſciouſneſs that his miſery is felt by himſelf only, which is of all ſentiments the moſt unſup-

unſupportable. There is no ſympathy in the other; or, if there is any, it is not with his pain, which is a trifle, but with his conſciouſneſs of the want of ſympathy with which this pain is attended. It is with his ſhame, not with his ſorrow. Thoſe who pity him, bluſh and hang down their heads for him. He droops in the ſame manner, and feels himſelf irrecoverably degraded by the puniſhment, though not by the crime. The man, on the contrary, who dies with reſolution, as he is naturally regarded with the erect aſpect of eſteem and approbation, ſo he wears himſelf the ſame undaunted countenance; and, if the crime does not deprive him of the reſpect of others, the puniſhment never will. He has no ſuſpicion that his ſituation is the object of contempt or deriſion to any body, and he can, with propriety, aſſume the air, not only of perfect ſerenity, but of triumph and exultation.

"Great dangers, ſays the Cardinal de "Retz, have their charms, becauſe there is "ſome glory to be got, even when we miſ-"carry. But moderate dangers have no-"thing but what is horrible, becauſe the "loſs of reputation always attends the want "of ſucceſs." His maxim has the ſame foundation with what we have been juſt now obſerving, with regard to puniſhments.

Human virtue is ſuperior to pain, to poverty, to danger, and to death; nor does it even require its utmoſt efforts to deſpiſe them.

But

But to have its misery exposed to insult and derision, to be led in triumph, to be set up for the hand of scorn to point at, is a situation in which its constancy is much more apt to fail. Compared with the contempt of mankind, all other evils are easily supported.

PART

PART II.

Of MERIT and DEMERIT; or, of the Objects of REWARD and PUNISHMENT.

Consisting of three SECTIONS.

SECTION I.

Of the sense of merit and demerit.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is another set of qualities ascribed to the actions and conduct of mankind, distinct from their propriety or impropriety, their decency or ungracefulness, and which are the objects of a distinct species of approbation and disapprobation. These are merit and demerit, the qualities of deserving reward, and of deserving punishment.

It has already been observed, that the sentiment or affection of the heart, from which any action proceeds, and upon which its whole virtue or vice depends, may be considered under two different aspects, or in two different relations: first, in relation to the cause or object which excites it; and, secondly, in relation

relation to the end which it propoſes, or to the effect which it tends to produce: that upon the ſuitableneſs or unſuitableneſs, upon the proportion or diſproportion, which the affection ſeems to bear to the cauſe or object which excites it, depends the propriety or impropriety, the decency or ungracefulneſs of the conſequent action; and that upon the beneficial or hurtful effects which the affection propoſes or tends to produce, depends the merit or demerit, the good or ill deſert of the action to which it gives occaſion. Wherein conſiſts our ſenſe of the propriety or impropriety of actions, has been explained in the former part of this diſcourſe. We come now to conſider, wherein conſiſts that of their good or ill deſert.

CHAP. I.

That whatever appears to be the proper object of gratitude, appears to deſerve reward; and that, in the ſame manner, whatever appears to be the proper object of reſentment, appears to deſerve puniſhment.

TO us, therefore, that action muſt appear to deſerve reward, which appears to be the proper and approved object of that ſentiment, which moſt immediately and directly prompts us to reward, or to do good to another. And in the ſame manner, that action muſt appear to deſerve puniſhment,

which appears to be the proper and approved object of that ſentiment which moſt immediately and directly prompts us to puniſh, or to inflict evil upon another.

The ſentiment which moſt immediately and directly prompts us to reward, is gratitude; that which moſt immediately and directly prompts us to puniſh, is reſentment.

To us, therefore, that action muſt appear to deſerve reward, which appears to be the proper and approved object of gratitude; as, on the other hand, that action muſt appear to deſerve puniſhment, which appears to be the proper and approved object of reſentment.

To reward, is to recompenſe, to remunerate, to return good for good received. To puniſh, too, is to recompenſe, to remunerate, though in a different manner; it is to return evil for evil that has been done.

There are ſome other paſſions, beſides gratitude and reſentment, which intereſt us in the happineſs or miſery of others; but there are none which ſo directly excite us to be the inſtruments of either. The love and eſteem which grow upon acquaintance and habitual approbation, neceſſarily lead us to be pleaſed with the good fortune of the man who is the object of ſuch agreeable emotions, and conſequently, to be willing to lend a hand to promote it. Our love, however, is fully ſatisfied, though his good fortune ſhould be brought about without our aſſiſtance. All that this paſſion deſires is to ſee him happy, without regarding who was the author of his

proſperity.

prosperity. But gratitude is not to be satisfied in this manner. If the person to whom we owe many obligations, is made happy without our assistance, though it pleases our love, it does not content our gratitude. Till we have recompensed him, till we ourselves have been instrumental in promoting his happiness, we feel ourselves still loaded with that debt which his past services have laid upon us.

The hatred and dislike, in the same manner, which grow upon habitual disapprobation, would often lead us to take a malicious pleasure in the misfortune of the man whose conduct and character excite so painful a passion. But though dislike and hatred harden us against all sympathy, and sometimes dispose us even to rejoice at the distress of another, yet, if there is no resentment in the case, if neither we nor our friends have received any great personal provocation, these passions would not naturally lead us to wish to be instrumental in bringing it about. Tho' we could fear no punishment in consequence of our having had some hand in it, we would rather that it should happen by other means. To one under the dominion of violent hatred it would be agreeable, perhaps, to hear, that the person whom he abhorred and detested was killed by some accident. But if he had the least spark of justice, which, though this passion is not very favourable to virtue, he might still have, it would hurt him excessively to have been himself, even without design,

design, the occasion of this misfortune. Much more would the very thought of voluntarily contributing to it shock him beyond all measure. He would reject with horror even the imagination of so execrable a design; and if he could imagine himself capable of such an enormity, he would begin to regard himself in the same odious light in which he had considered the person who was the object of his dislike. But it is quite otherwise with resentment: if the person who had done us some great injury, who had murdered our father or our brother, for example, should soon afterwards die of a fever, or even be brought to the scaffold upon account of some other crime, though it might sooth our hatred, it would not fully gratify our resentment. Resentment would prompt us to desire, not only that he should be punished, but that he should be punished by our means, and upon account of that particular injury which he had done to us. Resentment cannot be fully gratified, unless the offender is not only made to grieve in his turn, but to grieve for that particular wrong which we have suffered from him. He must be made to repent and be sorry for this very action, that others, through fear of the like punishment, may be terrified from being guilty of the like offence. The natural gratification of this passion tends, of its own accord, to produce all the political ends of punishment; the correction of the criminal, and the example to the public.

Gratitude and resentment, therefore, are the sentiments which most immediately and directly prompt to reward and to punish. To us, therefore, he must appear to deserve reward, who appears to be the proper and approved object of gratitude; and he to deserve punishment, who appears to be that of resentment.

CHAP. II.

Of the proper objects of gratitude and resentment.

TO be the proper and approved object either of gratitude or resentment, can mean nothing but to be the object of that gratitude, and of that resentment, which naturally seems proper, and is approved of.

But these, as well as all the other passions of human nature, seem proper and are approved of, when the heart of every impartial spectator intirely sympathises with them, when every indifferent by-stander intirely enters into, and goes along with them.

He, therefore, appears to deserve reward, who, to some person or persons, is the natural object of a gratitude which every human heart is disposed to beat time to, and thereby applaud: and he, on the other hand, appears to deserve punishment, who in the same manner is to some person or persons the natural object of a resentment which the breast of every reasonable man is ready to adopt and sympathise with. To us, surely, that action must

muſt appear to deſerve reward, which every body who knows of it would wiſh to reward, and therefore delights to ſee rewarded: and that action muſt as ſurely appear to deſerve puniſhment, which every body who hears of it is angry with, and upon that account rejoices to ſee puniſhed.

1. As we ſympathiſe with the joy of our companions when in proſperity, ſo we join with them in the complacency and ſatisfaction with which they naturally regard whatever is the cauſe of their good fortune. We enter into the love and affection which they conceive for it, and begin to love it too. We ſhould be ſorry for their ſakes if it was deſtroyed, or even if it was placed at too great a diſtance from them, and out of the reach of their care and protection, though they ſhould loſe nothing by its abſence except the pleaſure of ſeeing it. If it is man who has thus been the fortunate inſtrument of the happineſs of his brethren, this is ſtill more peculiarly the caſe. When we ſee one man aſſiſted, protected, relieved by another, our ſympathy with the joy of the perſon who receives the benefit ſerves only to animate our fellow-feeling with his gratitude towards him who beſtows it. When we look upon the perſon who is the cauſe of his pleaſure with the eyes with which we imagine he muſt look upon him, his benefactor ſeems to ſtand before us in the moſt engaging and amiable light. We readily therefore ſympathiſe with the grateful affection which he conceives

for a perſon to whom he has been ſo much obliged; and conſequently applaud the returns which he is diſpoſed to make for the good offices conferred upon him. As we entirely enter into the affection from which theſe returns proceed, they neceſſarily ſeem every way proper and ſuitable to their object.

2. In the ſame manner, as we ſympathiſe with the ſorrow of our fellow-creature whenever we ſee his diſtreſs, ſo we likewiſe enter into his abhorrence and averſion for whatever has given occaſion to it. Our heart, as it adopts and beats time to his grief, ſo is it likewiſe animated with that ſpirit by which he endeavours to drive away or deſtroy the cauſe of it. The indolent and paſſive fellow-feeling, by which we accompany him in his ſufferings, readily gives way to that more vigorous and active ſentiment by which we go along with him in the effort he makes, either to repel them, or to gratify his averſion to what has given occaſion to them. This is ſtill more peculiarly the caſe, when it is man who has cauſed them. When we ſee one man oppreſſed or injured by another, the ſympathy which we feel with the diſtreſs of the ſufferer ſeems to ſerve only to animate our fellow-feeling with his reſentment againſt the offender. We are rejoiced to ſee him attack his adverſary in his turn, and are eager and ready to aſſiſt him whenever he exerts himſelf for defence, or even for vengeance within a certain degree. If the injured ſhould periſh in the quarrel, we not only

only ſympathiſe with the real reſentment of his friends and relations, but with the imaginary reſentment which in fancy we lend to the dead, who is no longer capable of feeling that or any other human ſentiment. But as we put ourſelves in his ſituation, as we enter, as it were, into his body, and in our imaginations, in ſome meaſure, animate anew the deformed and mangled carcaſe of the ſlain, when we bring home in this manner his caſe to our own boſoms, we feel upon this, as upon many other occaſions, an emotion which the perſon principally concerned is incapable of feeling, and which yet we feel by an illuſive ſympathy with him. The ſympathetic tears which we ſhed for that immenſe and irretrievable loſs, which in our fancy he appears to have ſuſtained, ſeem to be but a ſmall part of the duty which we owe him. The injury which he has ſuffered demands, we think, a principal part of our attention. We feel that reſentment which we imagine he ought to feel, and which he would feel, if in his cold and lifeleſs body there remained any conſciouſneſs of what paſſes upon earth. His blood, we think, calls aloud for vengeance. The very aſhes of the dead ſeem to be diſturbed at the thought that his injuries are to paſs unrevenged. The horrors which are ſuppoſed to haunt the bed of the murderer, the ghoſts which, ſuperſtition imagines, riſe from their graves to demand vengeance upon thoſe who brought them to an untimely end, all take their origin from this natural ſym-

pathy with the imaginary resentment of the slain. And with regard, at least, to this most dreadful of all crimes, nature, antecedent to all reflexions upon the utility of punishment, has in this manner stamped upon the human heart, in the strongest and most indelible characters, an immediate and instinctive approbation of the sacred and necessary law of retaliation.

CHAP. III.

That where there is no approbation of the conduct of the person who confers the benefit, there is little sympathy with the gratitude of him who receives it: and that, on the contrary, where there is no disapprobation of the motives of the person who does the mischief, there is no sort of sympathy with the resentment of him who suffers it.

IT is to be observed, however, that, how beneficial soever on the one hand, or how hurtful soever on the other, the actions or intentions of the person who acts may have been to the person who is, if I may say so, acted upon, yet if in the one case there appears to have been no propriety in the motives of the agent, if we cannot enter into the affections which influenced his conduct, we have little sympathy with the gratitude of the person who receives the benefit: or if, in the other case, there appears to have been no impropriety

impropriety in the motives of the agent, if, on the contrary, the affections which influenced his conduct are ſuch as we muſt neceſſarily enter into, we can have no ſort of ſympathy with the reſentment of the perſon who ſuffers. Little gratitude ſeems due in the one caſe, and all ſort of reſentment ſeems unjuſt in the other. The one action ſeems to merit little reward, the other to deſerve no puniſhment.

1. Firſt, I ſay, That wherever we cannot ſympathiſe with the affections of the agent, wherever there ſeems to be no propriety in the motives which influenced his conduct, we are leſs diſpoſed to enter into the gratitude of the perſon who received the benefit of his actions. A very ſmall return ſeems due to that fooliſh and profuſe generoſity which confers the greateſt benefits from the moſt trivial motives, and gives an eſtate to a man merely becauſe his name and ſirname happen to be the ſame with thoſe of the giver. Such ſervices do not ſeem to demand any proportionable recompenſe. Our contempt for the folly of the agent hinders us from thoroughly entering into the gratitude of the perſon to whom the good office has been done. His benefactor ſeems unworthy of it. As when we place ourſelves in the ſituation of the perſon obliged, we feel that we could conceive no great reverence for ſuch a benefactor, we eaſily abſolve him from a great deal of that ſubmiſſive veneration and eſteem which we ſhould think due to a more reſpectable cha-

racter; and provided he always treats his weak friend with kindneſs and humanity, we are willing to excuſe him from many attentions and regards which we ſhould demand to a worthier patron. Thoſe Princes, who have heaped, with the greateſt profuſion, wealth, power, and honours, upon their favourites, have ſeldom excited that degree of attachment to their perſons which has often been experienced by thoſe who were more frugal of their favours. The well-natured, but injudicious prodigality, of James the Firſt of Great Britain ſeems to have attached no body to his perſon; and that Prince, notwithſtanding his ſocial and harmleſs diſpoſition, appears to have lived and died without a friend. The whole gentry and nobility of England expoſed their lives and fortunes in the cauſe of his more frugal and diſtinguiſhing ſon, notwithſtanding the coldneſs and diſtant ſeverity of his ordinary deportment.

2. Secondly, I ſay, That wherever the conduct of the agent appears to have been intirely directed by motives and affections which we thoroughly enter into and approve of, we can have no ſort of ſympathy with the reſentment of the ſufferer, how great ſoever the miſchief which may have been done to him. When two people quarrel, if we take part with, and intirely adopt the reſentment of one of them, it is impoſſible that we ſhould enter into that of the other. Our ſympathy with the perſon whoſe motives we go along with, and whom therefore we look upon as in

in the right, cannot but harden us against all fellow-feeling with the other, whom we necessarily regard as in the wrong. Whatever this last, therefore, may have suffered, while it is no more than what we ourselves should have wished him to suffer, while it is no more than what our own sympathetic indignation would have prompted us to inflict upon him, it cannot either displease or provoke us. When an inhuman murderer is brought to the scaffold, though we have some compassion for his misery, we can have no sort of fellow-feeling with his resentment, if he should be so absurd as to express any against either his prosecutor or his judge. The natural tendency of their just indignation against so vile a criminal is indeed the most fatal and ruinous to him. But it is impossible that we should be displeased with the tendency of a sentiment, which, when we bring the case home to ourselves, we feel that we cannot avoid adopting.

CHAP. IV.

Recapitulation of the foregoing chapters.

1. WE do not, therefore, thoroughly and heartily sympathise with the gratitude of one man towards another, merely because this other has been the cause of his good fortune, unless he has been the cause of it from motives which we intirely go along with. Our heart must adopt the principles of

of the agent, and go along with all the affections which influenced his conduct, before it can intirely ſympathiſe with, and beat time to, the gratitude of the perſon who has been benefited by his actions. If in the conduct of the benefactor there appears to have been no propriety, how beneficial ſoever its effects, it does not ſeem to demand, or neceſſarily to require, any proportionable recompence.

But when to the beneficent tendency of the action is joined the propriety of the affection from which it proceeds, when we intirely ſympathiſe and go along with the motives of the agent, the love which we conceive for him upon his own account enhances and enlivens our fellow-feeling with the gratitude of thoſe who owe their proſperity to his good conduct. His actions ſeem then to demand, and, if I may ſay ſo, to call aloud for a proportionable recompenſe. We then intirely enter into that gratitude which prompts to beſtow it. The benefactor ſeems then to be the proper object of reward, when we thus intirely ſympathiſe with, and approve of, that ſentiment which prompts to reward him. When we approve of, and go along with, the affection from which the action proceeds, we muſt neceſſarily approve of the action, and regard the perſon towards whom it is directed as its proper and ſuitable object.

2. In the ſame manner, we cannot at all ſympathiſe with the reſentment of one man againſt another, merely becauſe this other has been the cauſe of his misfortune, unleſs he

he has been the cauſe of it from motives which we cannot enter into. Before we can adopt the reſentment of the ſufferer, we muſt diſapprove of the motives of the agent, and feel that our heart renounces all ſympathy with the affections which influenced his conduct. If there appears to have been no impropriety in theſe, how fatal ſoever the tendency of the action which proceeds from them to thoſe againſt whom it is directed, it does not ſeem to deſerve any puniſhment, or to be the proper object of any reſentment.

But when to the hurtfulneſs of the action is joined the impropriety of the affection from whence it proceeds, when our heart rejects with abhorrence all fellow-feeling with the motives of the agent, we then heartily and intirely ſympathiſe with the reſentment of the ſufferer. Such actions ſeem then to deſerve, and, if I may ſay ſo, to call aloud for, a proportionable puniſhment; and we entirely enter into, and thereby approve of, that reſentment which prompts to inflict it. The offender neceſſarily ſeems then to be the proper object of puniſhment, when we thus intirely ſympathiſe with, and thereby approve of, that ſentiment which prompts to puniſh. In this caſe too, when we approve, and go along with, the affection from which the action proceeds, we muſt neceſſarily approve of the action, and regard the perſon againſt whom it is directed, as its proper and ſuitable object.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The analysis of the sense of merit and demerit.

1. AS our sense, therefore, of the propriety of conduct arises from what I shall call a direct sympathy with the affections and motives of the person who acts, so our sense of its merit arises from what I shall call an indirect sympathy with the gratitude of the person who is, if I may say so, acted upon.

As we cannot indeed enter thoroughly into the gratitude of the person who receives the benefit, unless we beforehand approve of the motives of the benefactor, so, upon this account, the sense of merit seems to be a compounded sentiment, and to be made up of two distinct emotions; a direct sympathy with the sentiments of the agent, and an indirect sympathy with the gratitude of those who receive the benefit of his actions.

We may, upon many different occasions, plainly distinguish those two different emotions combining and uniting together in our sense of the good desert of a particular character or action. When we read in history concerning actions of proper and beneficent greatness of mind, how eagerly do we enter into such designs? How much are we animated by that high-spirited generosity which directs them? How keen are we for their

ſucceſs? How grieved at their diſappointment? In imagination we become the very perſon whoſe actions are repreſented to us: we tranſport ourſelves in fancy to the ſcenes of thoſe diſtant and forgotten adventures, and imagine ourſelves acting the part of a Scipio or a Camillus, a Timoleon or an Ariſtides. So far our ſentiments are founded upon the direct ſympathy with the perſon who acts. Nor is the indirect ſympathy with thoſe who receive the benefit of ſuch actions leſs ſenſibly felt. Whenever we place ourſelves in the ſituation of theſe laſt, with what warm and affectionate fellow-feeling do we enter into their gratitude towards thoſe who ſerved them ſo eſſentially? We embrace, as it were, their benefactor along with them. Our heart readily ſympathiſes with the higheſt tranſports of their grateful affection. No honours, no rewards, we think, can be too great for them to beſtow upon him. When they make this proper return for his ſervices, we heartily applaud and go along with them; but are ſhocked beyond all meaſure, if by their conduct they appear to have little ſenſe of the obligations conferred upon them. Our whole ſenſe, in ſhort, of the merit and good deſert of ſuch actions, of the propriety and fitneſs of recompenſing them, and making the perſon who performed them rejoice in his turn, ariſes from the ſympathetic emotions of gratitude and love, with which, when we bring home to our own breaſt the ſituation of thoſe principally concerned, we feel ourſelves naturally

turally tranſported towards the man who could act with ſuch proper and noble beneficence.

2. In the ſame manner as our ſenſe of the impropriety of conduct ariſes from a want of ſympathy, or from a direct antipathy to the affections and motives of the agent, ſo our ſenſe of its demerit ariſes from what I ſhall here too call an indirect ſympathy with the reſentment of the ſufferer.

As we cannot indeed enter into the reſentment of the ſufferer, unleſs our heart beforehand diſapproves the motives of the agent, and renounces all fellow-feeling with them; ſo upon this account the ſenſe of demerit, as well as that of merit, ſeems to be a compounded ſentiment, and to be made up of two diſtinct emotions; a direct antipathy to the ſentiments of the agent, and an indirect ſympathy with the reſentment of the ſufferer.

We may here too, upon many different occaſions, plainly diſtinguiſh thoſe two different emotions combining and uniting together in our ſenſe of the ill deſert of a particular character or action. When we read in hiſtory concerning the perfidy and cruelty of a Borgia or a Nero, our heart riſes up againſt the deteſtable ſentiments which influenced their conduct, and renounces with horror and abomination all fellow-feeling with ſuch execrable motives. So far our ſentiments are founded upon the direct antipathy to the affections of the agent: and the indirect ſympathy

pathy with the resentment of the sufferers is still more sensibly felt. When we bring home to ourselves the situation of the persons whom those scourges of mankind insulted, murdered, or betrayed, what indignation do we not feel against such insolent and inhuman oppressors of the earth? Our sympathy with the unavoidable distress of the innocent sufferers is not more real nor more lively, than our fellow-feeling with their just and natural resentment. The former sentiment only heightens the latter, and the idea of their distress serves only to inflame and blow up our animosity against those who occasioned it. When we think of the anguish of the sufferers, we take part with them more earnestly against their oppressors; we enter with more eagerness into all their schemes of vengeance, and feel ourselves every moment wreaking, in imagination, upon such violators of the laws of society, that punishment which our sympathetic indignation tells us is due to their crimes. Our sense of the horror and dreadful atrocity of such conduct, the delight which we take in hearing that it was properly punished, the indignation which we feel when it escapes this due retaliation, our whole sense and feeling, in short, of its ill desert, of the propriety and fitness of inflicting evil upon the person who is guilty of it, and of making him grieve in his turn, arises from the sympathetic indignation which naturally boils up in the breast of the spectator, whenever

whenever he thoroughly brings home to himself the case of the sufferer *.

* To ascribe in this manner our natural sense of the ill desert of human actions to a sympathy with the resentment of the sufferer, may seem, to the greater part of people, to be a degradation of that sentiment. Resentment is commonly regarded as so odious a passion, that they will be apt to think it impossible that so laudable a principle, as the sense of the ill desert of vice, should in any respect be founded upon it. They will be more willing, perhaps, to admit that our sense of the merit of good actions is founded upon a sympathy with the gratitude of the persons who receive the benefit of them; because gratitude, as well as all the other benevolent passions, is regarded as an amiable principle, which can take nothing from the worth of whatever is founded upon it. Gratitude and resentment, however, are in every respect, it is evident, counterparts to one another; and if our sense of merit arises from a sympathy with the one, our sense of demerit can scarce miss to proceed from a fellow-feeling with the other.

Let it be considered too that resentment, though, in the degrees in which we too often see it, the most odious, perhaps of all the passions, is not disapproved of when properly humbled and entirely brought down to the level of the sympathetic indignation of the spectator. When we, who are the bystanders, feel that our own animosity intirely corresponds with that of the sufferer, when the resentment of this last does not in any respect go beyond our own, when no word, no gesture, escapes him that denotes an emotion more violent than what we can keep time to, and when he never aims at inflicting any punishment beyond what we should rejoice to see inflicted, or what we ourselves would upon this account even desire to be the instruments of inflicting, it is impossible, that we should not entirely approve of his sentiments. Our own emotion in this case must, in our eyes, undoubtedly justify his. And as experience teaches us how much the greater part of mankind are incapable of this moderation, and how great an effort must be made in order to bring down the rude and undisciplined impulse of resentment to this suitable

ſuitable temper, we cannot avoid conceiving a conſiderable degree of eſteem and admiration for one who appears capable of exerting ſo much ſelf-command over one of the moſt ungovernable paſſions of his nature. When indeed the animoſity of the ſufferer exceeds, as it almoſt always does, what we can go along with, as we cannot enter into it, we neceſſarily diſapprove of it. We even diſapprove of it more than we ſhould of an equal exceſs of almoſt any other paſſion derived from the imagination. And this too violent reſentment, inſtead of carrying us along with it, becomes itſelf the object of our reſentment and indignation. We enter into the oppoſite reſentment of the perſon who is the object of this unjuſt emotion, and who is in danger of ſuffering from it. Revenge, therefore, the exceſs of reſentment, appears to be the moſt deteſtable of all the paſſions, and is the object of the horror and indignation of every body. And as in the way in which this paſſion commonly diſcovers itſelf among mankind, it is exceſſive a hundred times for once that it is moderate, we are very apt to conſider it as altogether odious and deteſtable, becauſe in its moſt ordinary appearances it is ſo. Nature, however, even in the preſent depraved ſtate of mankind, does not ſeem to have dealt ſo unkindly with us, as to have endowed us with any principle which is wholly in every reſpect evil, or which, in no degree and in no direction, can be the proper object of praiſe and approbation. Upon ſome occaſions we are ſenſible that this paſſion, which is generally too ſtrong, may likewiſe be too weak. We ſometimes complain that a particular perſon ſhows too little ſpirit, and has too little ſenſe of the injuries that have been done to him; and we are as ready to deſpiſe him for the defect, as to hate him for the exceſs of this paſſion.

The inſpired writers would not ſurely have talked ſo frequently or ſo ſtrongly of the wrath and anger of God, if they had regarded every degree of thoſe paſſions as vicious and evil, even in ſo weak and imperfect a creature as man.

Let it be conſidered too, that the preſent enquiry is not concerning a matter of right, if I may ſay ſo, but concerning a matter of fact. We are not at preſent examining upon what principles a perfect being would approve of the puniſhment of bad actions; but upon what principles ſo weak and imperfect a creature as man actually and in

fact approves of it. The principles which I have just now mentioned, it is evident, have a very great effect upon his sentiments; and it seems wisely ordered that it should be so. The very existence of society requires that unmerited and unprovoked malice should be restrained by proper punishments; and consequently, that to inflict those punishments should be regarded as a proper and laudable action. Though man, therefore, be naturally endowed with a desire of the welfare and preservation of society, yet the author of nature has not entrusted it to his reason to find out that a certain application of punishments is the proper means of attaining this end; but has endowed him with an immediate and instinctive approbation of that very application which is most proper to attain it. The œconomy of nature is in this respect exactly of a piece with what it is upon many other occasions. With regard to all those ends which, upon account of their peculiar importance, may be regarded, if such an expression is allowable, as the favourite ends of nature, she has constantly in this manner not only endowed mankind with an appetite for the end which she proposes, but likewise with an appetite for the means by which alone this end can be brought about, for their own sakes, and independent of their tendency to produce it. Thus self-preservation, and the propagation of the species, are the great ends which nature seems to have proposed in the formation of all animals. Mankind are endowed with a desire of those ends, and an aversion to the contrary; with a love of life, and a dread of dissolution; with a desire of the continuance and perpetuity of the species, and with an aversion to the thoughts of its intire extinction. But though we are in this manner endowed with a very strong desire of those ends, it has not been intrusted to the slow and uncertain determinations of our reason, to find out the proper means of bringing them about. Nature has directed us to the greater part of these by original and immediate instincts. Hunger, thirst, the passion which unites the two sexes, the love of pleasure, and the dread of pain, prompt us to apply those means for their own sakes, and without any consideration of their tendency to those beneficent ends which the great director of nature intended to produce by them.

Before

Before I conclude this note, I muſt take notice of a difference between the approbation of propriety and that of merit or beneficence. Before we approve of the ſentiments of any perſon as proper and ſuitable to their objects, we muſt not only be affected in the ſame manner as he is, but we muſt perceive this harmony and correſpondence of ſentiments between him and ourſelves. Thus, though upon hearing of a misfortune that had befallen my friend, I ſhould conceive preciſely that degree of concern which he gives way to; yet till I am informed of the manner in which he behaves, till I perceive the harmony between his emotions and mine, I cannot be ſaid to approve of the ſentiments which influence his behaviour. The approbation of propriety therefore requires, not only that we ſhould intirely ſympathize with the perſon who acts, but that we ſhould perceive this perfect concord between his ſentiments and our own. On the contrary, when I hear of a benefit that has been beſtowed upon another perſon, let him who has received it be affected in what manner he pleaſes, if, by bringing his ~~own~~ caſe home to himſelf, I feel gratitude ariſe in my own breaſt, I neceſſarily approve of the conduct of his benefactor, and regard it as meritorious, and the proper object of reward. Whether the perſon who has received the benefit conceives gratitude or not, cannot, it is evident, in any degree alter our ſentiments with regard to the merit of him who has beſtowed it. No actual correſpondence of ſentiments, therefore, is here required. It is ſufficient that, if he was grateful, they would correſpond; and our ſenſe of merit is often founded upon one of thoſe illuſive ſympathies, by which, when we bring home to ourſelves the caſe of another, we are often affected in a manner in which the perſon principally concerned is incapable of being affected. There is a ſimilar difference between our diſapprobation of demerit, and that of impropriety.

myself

SECTION II.

Of juſtice and beneficence.

CHAP. I.

Compariſon of thoſe two virtues.

ACTIONS of a beneficent tendency which proceed from proper motives ſeem alone to require reward; becauſe ſuch alone are the approved objects of gratitude, or excite the ſympathetic gratitude of the ſpectator.

Actions of a hurtful tendency, which proceed from improper motives, ſeem alone to deſerve puniſhment; becauſe ſuch alone are the approved objects of reſentment, or excite the ſympathetic reſentment of the ſpectator.

Beneficence is always free, it cannot be extorted by force, the meer want of it expoſes to no puniſhment: becauſe the meer want of beneficence tends to do no real poſitive evil. It may diſappoint of the good which might reaſonably have been expected, and upon that account it may juſtly excite diſlike and diſapprobation: it cannot, however, provoke any reſentment which mankind will go along with. The man who does not recompence his benefactor, when he has it in his power, and when his benefactor needs his

aſſiſtance,

assistance, is, no doubt, guilty of the blackest ingratitude. The heart of every impartial spectator rejects all fellow-feeling with the selfishness of his motives, and he is the proper object of the highest disapprobation. But still he does no positive hurt to any body. He only does not do that good which in propriety he ought to have done. He is the object of hatred, a passion which is naturally excited by impropriety of sentiment and behaviour; not of resentment, a passion which is never properly called forth but by actions which tend to do real and positive hurt to some particular persons. His want of gratitude, therefore, cannot be punished. To oblige him by force to perform what in gratitude he ought to perform, and what every impartial spectator would approve of him for performing, would, if possible, be still more improper than his neglecting to perform it. His benefactor would dishonour himself if he attempted by violence to constrain him to gratitude, and it would be impertinent for any third person, who was not the superior of either, to intermeddle. But of all the duties of beneficence, those which gratitude recommends to us approach nearest to what is called a perfect and compleat obligation. What friendship, what generosity, what charity, would prompt us to do with universal approbation, is still more free, and can still less be extorted by force than the duties of gratitude. We talk of the debt of gratitude, not of charity, or generosity, nor even of friendship, when friend-

ſhip is meer eſteem, and has not been enhanced and complicated with gratitude for good offices.

Reſentment ſeems to have been given us by nature for defence, and for defence only. It is the ſafeguard of juſtice and the ſecurity of innocence. It prompts us to beat off the miſchief which is attempted to be done to us, and to retaliate that which is already done; that the offender may be made to repent of his injuſtice, and that others, through fear of the like puniſhment, may be terrified from being guilty of the like offence. It muſt be reſerved therefore for theſe purpoſes, nor can the ſpectator ever go along with it when it is exerted for any other. But the meer want of the beneficent virtues, though it may diſappoint us of the good which might reaſonably be expected, neither does, nor attempts to do, any miſchief from which we can have occaſion to defend ourſelves.

There is, however, another virtue, of which the obſervance is not left to the freedom of our own wills, which may be extorted by force, and of which the violation expoſes to reſentment, and conſequently to puniſhment. This virtue is juſtice: the violation of juſtice is injury: it does real and poſitive hurt to ſome particular perſons, from motives which are naturally diſapproved of. It is, therefore, the proper object of reſentment, and of puniſhment, which is the natural conſequence of reſentment. As mankind go along with, and approve of, the violence employed to avenge

avenge the hurt which is done by injuſtice, ſo they much more go along with, and approve of, that which is employed to prevent and beat off the injury, and to reſtrain the offender from hurting his neighbours. The perſon himſelf who meditates an injuſtice is ſenſible of this, and feels that force may, with the utmoſt propriety, be made uſe of both by the perſon whom he is about to injure, and by others, either to obſtruct the execution of his crime, or to puniſh him when he has executed it. And upon this is founded that remarkable diſtinction between juſtice and all the other ſocial virtues, which has of late been particularly inſiſted upon by an author of very great and original genius, that we feel ourſelves to be under a ſtricter obligation to act according to juſtice, than agreeably to friendſhip, charity, or generoſity; that the practice of theſe laſt mentioned virtues ſeems to be left in ſome meaſure to our own choice, but that, ſomehow or other, we feel ourſelves to be in a peculiar manner tyed, bound, and obliged to the obſervation of juſtice. We feel, that is to ſay, that force may, with the utmoſt propriety, and with the approbation of all mankind, be made uſe of to conſtrain us to obſerve the rules of the one, but not to follow the precepts of the other.

We muſt always, however, carefully diſtinguiſh what is only blameable, or the proper object of diſapprobation, from what force may be employed either to puniſh or to prevent. That ſeems blameable which [illegible]

ſhort of that ordinary degree of proper beneficence which experience teaches us to expect of every body; and on the contrary, that ſeems praiſe-worthy which goes beyond it. The ordinary degree itſelf ſeems neither blameable nor praiſe-worthy. A father, a ſon, a brother, who behaves to the correſpondent relation neither better nor worſe than the greater part of men commonly do, ſeems properly to deſerve neither praiſe nor blame. He who ſurpriſes us by extraordinary and unexpected, though ſtill proper, and ſuitable kindneſs, or on the contrary by extraordinary and unexpected, as well as unſuitable unkindneſs, ſeems praiſe-worthy in the one caſe, and blameable in the other.

Even the moſt ordinary degree of kindneſs or beneficence, however, cannot, among equals, be extorted by force. Among equals each individual is naturally, and antecedent to the inſtitution of civil government, regarded as having a right both to defend himſelf from injuries, and to exact a certain degree of puniſhment for thoſe which have been done to him. Every generous ſpectator not only approves of his conduct when he does this, but enters ſo far into his ſentiments as often to be willing to aſſiſt him. When one man attacks, or robs, or attempts to murder another, all the neighbours take the alarm, and think that they do right when they run, either to revenge the perſon who has been injured, or to defend him who is in danger of being ſo. But when a father fails in the ordinary

dinary degree of parental affection towards a ſon; when a ſon ſeems to want that filial reverence which might be expected to his father; when brothers are without the uſual degree of brotherly affection; when a man ſhuts his breaſt againſt compaſſion, and refuſes to relieve the miſery of his fellow-creatures, when he can with the greateſt eaſe; in all theſe caſes, though every body blames the conduct, nobody imagines that thoſe who might have reaſon, perhaps, to expect more kindneſs, have any right to extort it by force. The ſufferer can only complain, and the ſpectator can intermeddle no other way than by advice and perſuaſion. Upon all ſuch occaſions, for equals to uſe force againſt one another would be thought the higheſt degree of inſolence and preſumption.

A ſuperior may, indeed, ſometimes, with univerſal approbation, oblige thoſe under his juriſdiction to behave, in this reſpect, with a certain degree of propriety to one another. The laws of all civilized nations oblige parents to maintain their children, and children to maintain their parents, and impoſe upon men many other duties of beneficence. The civil magiſtrate is entruſted with the power not only of preſerving the public peace by reſtraining injuſtice, but of promoting the proſperity of the commonwealth, by eſtabliſhing good diſcipline, and by diſcouraging every ſort of vice and impropriety; he may preſcribe rules, therefore, which not only prohibit mutual injuries among fellow-citi-

zens,

zens, but command mutual good offices to a certain degree. When the ſovereign commands what is merely indifferent, and what, antecedent to his orders, might have been omitted without any blame, it becomes not only blameable but puniſhable to diſobey him. When he commands, therefore, what, antecedent to any ſuch order, could not have been omitted without the greateſt blame, it ſurely becomes much more puniſhable to be wanting in obedience. Of all the duties of a law-giver, however, this, perhaps, is what it requires the greateſt delicacy and reſerve to execute with propriety and judgment. To neglect it altogether expoſes the commonwealth to many groſs diſorders and ſhocking enormities, and to puſh it too far is deſtructive of all liberty, ſecurity, and juſtice.

Though the meer want of beneficence ſeems to merit no puniſhment from equals, the greater exertions of that virtue appear to deſerve the higheſt reward. By being productive of the greateſt good, they are the natural and approved objects of the livelieſt gratitude. Though the breach of juſtice, on the contrary, expoſes to puniſhment, the obſervance of the rules of that virtue ſeems ſcarce to deſerve any reward. There is, no doubt, a propriety in the practice of juſtice, and it merits, upon that account, all the approbation which is due to propriety. But as it does no real poſitive good, it is entitled to very little gratitude. Meer juſtice is, upon

most occasions, but a negative virtue, and only hinders us from hurting our neighbour. The man who barely abstains from violating either the person, or the estate, or the reputation of his neighbours, has surely very little positive merit. He fulfils, however, all the rules of what is peculiarly called justice, and does every thing which his equals can with propriety force him to do, or which they can punish him for not doing. We may often fulfil all the rules of justice by sitting still and doing nothing.

As every man doth, so shall it be done to him, and retaliation seems to be the great law which is dictated to us by nature. Beneficence and generosity we think due to the generous and beneficent. Those whose hearts never open to the feelings of humanity, should, we think, be shut out in the same manner, from the affections of all their fellow-creatures, and be allowed to live in the midst of society, as in a great desart where there is no-body to care for them, or to enquire after them. The violator of the laws of justice ought to be made to feel himself that evil which he has done to another; and since no regard to the sufferings of his brethren is capable of restraining him, he ought to be over-awed by the fear of his own. The man who is barely innocent, who only observes the laws of justice with regard to others, and meerly abstains from hurting his neighbours, can merit only that his neighbours in their turn should respect

reſpect his innocence, and that the ſame laws ſhould be religiouſly obſerved with regard to him.

CHAP. II.

Of the ſenſe of juſtice, of remorſe, and of the conſciouſneſs of merit.

THERE can be no proper motive for hurting our neighbour, there can be no incitement to do evil to another, which mankind will go along with, except juſt indignation for evil which that other has done to us. To diſturb his happineſs meerly becauſe it ſtands in the way of our own, to take from him what is of real uſe to him meerly becauſe it may be of equal or of more uſe to us, or to indulge, in this manner, at the expence of other people, the natural preference which every man has for his own happineſs above that of other people, is what no impartial ſpectator can go along with. Every man is, no doubt, by nature, firſt and principally recommended to his own care; and as he is fitter to take care of himſelf than of any other perſon, it is fit and right that it ſhould be ſo. Every man, therefore, is much more deeply intereſted in whatever immediately concerns himſelf, than in what concerns any other man: and to hear, perhaps, of the death of another perſon, with whom we have no particular connection, will give us leſs concern, will ſpoil our ſtomach, or break our reſt

rest much less than a very insignificant disaster which has befallen ourselves. But though the ruin of our neighbour may affect us much less than a very small misfortune of our own, we must not ruin him to prevent that small misfortune, nor even to prevent our own ruin. We must, here, as in all other cases, view ourselves not so much according to that light in which we may naturally appear to ourselves, as according to that in which we naturally appear to others. Though every man may, according to the proverb, be the whole world to himself, to the rest of mankind he is a most insignificant part of it. Though his own happiness may be of more importance to him than that of all the world besides, to every other person it is of no more consequence than that of any other man. Though it may be true, therefore, that every individual, in his own breast, naturally prefers himself to all mankind, yet he dares not look mankind in the face, and avow that he acts according to this principle. He feels that in this preference they can never go along with him, and that how natural soever it may be to him, it must always appear excessive and extravagant to them. When he views himself in the light in which he is conscious that others will view him, he sees that to them he is but one of the multitude in no respect better than any other in it. If he would act so as that the impartial spectator may enter into the principles of his conduct, which is what of all things he has the greatest desire

ſire to do, he muſt, upon this, as upon all other occaſions, humble the arrogance of his ſelf-love, and bring it down to ſomething which other men can go along with. They will indulge it ſo far as to allow him to be more anxious about, and to purſue with more earneſt aſſiduity, his own happineſs than that of any other perſon. Thus far, whenever they place themſelves in his ſituation, they will readily go along with him. In the race for wealth, and honours, and preferments, he may run as hard as he can, and ſtrain every nerve and every muſcle, in order to outſtrip all his competitors. But if he ſhould juſtle, or throw down any of them, the indulgence of the ſpectators is entirely at an end. It is a violation of fair play, which they cannot admit of. This man is to them, in every reſpect, as good as he: they do not enter into that ſelf-love by which he prefers himſelf ſo much to this other, and cannot go along with the motive from which he hurt him. They readily, therefore, ſympathiſe with the natural reſentment of the injured, and the offender becomes the object of their hatred and indignation. He is ſenſible that he becomes ſo, and feels that thoſe ſentiments are ready to burſt out from all ſides againſt him.

As the greater and more irreparable the evil that is done, the reſentment of the ſufferer runs naturally the higher, ſo does likewiſe the ſympathetic indignation of the ſpectator, as well as the ſenſe of guilt in the agent.

Death

Death is the greateſt evil which one man can inflict upon another, and excites the higheſt degree of reſentment in thoſe who are immediately connected with the ſlain. Murder, therefore, is the moſt atrocious of all crimes which affect individuals only, in the ſight both of mankind, and of the perſon who has committed it. To be deprived of that which we are poſſeſſed of, is a greater evil than to be diſappointed of what we have only the expectation. Breach of property, therefore, theft and robbery, which take from us what we are poſſeſſed of, are greater crimes than breach of contract, which only diſappoints us of what we expected. The moſt ſacred laws of juſtice, therefore, thoſe whoſe violation ſeems to call loudeſt for vengeance and puniſhment, are the laws which guard the life and perſon of our neighbour; the next are thoſe which guard his property and poſſeſſions; and laſt of all come thoſe which guard what are called his perſonal rights, or what is due to him from the promiſes of others.

The violator of the more ſacred laws of juſtice can never reflect on the ſentiments which mankind muſt entertain with regard to him, without feeling all the agonies of ſhame and horror, and conſternation. When his paſſion is gratified, and he begins coolly to reflect on his paſt conduct, he can enter into none of the motives which influenced it. They appear now as deteſtable to him as they did always to other people. By ſympa-

thiſing

thiſing with the hatred and abhorrence which other men muſt entertain for him, he becomes in ſome meaſure the object of his own hatred and abhorrence. The ſituation of the perſon, who ſuffered by his injuſtice, now calls upon his pity. He is grieved at the thought of it; regrets the unhappy effects of his own conduct, and feels at the ſame time that they have rendered him the proper object of the reſentment and indignation of mankind, and of what is the natural conſequence of reſentment, vengeance and puniſhment. The thought of this perpetually haunts him, and fills him with terror and amazement. He dares no longer look ſociety in the face, but imagines himſelf as it were rejected, and thrown out from the affections of all mankind. He cannot hope for the conſolation of ſympathy in this his greateſt, and moſt dreadful diſtreſs. The remembrance of his crimes has ſhut out all fellow-feeling with him from the hearts of his fellow-creatures. The ſentiments which they entertain with regard to him, are the very thing which he is moſt afraid of. Every thing ſeems hoſtile, and he would be glad to fly to ſome inhoſpitable deſert, where he might never more behold the face of a human creature, nor read in the countenance of mankind the condemnation of his crimes. But ſolitude is ſtill more dreadful than ſociety. His own thoughts can preſent him with nothing but what is black, unfortunate, and diſaſtrous, the melancholy forebodings of incomprehenſible

comprehenſible miſery and ruin. The horror of ſolitude drives him back into ſociety, and he comes again into the preſence of mankind, aſtoniſhed to appear before them, loaded with ſhame and diſtracted with fear, in order to ſupplicate ſome little protection from the countenance of thoſe very judges, who he knows have already all unanimouſly condemned him. Such is the nature of that ſentiment, which is properly called remorſe; of all the ſentiments which can enter the human breaſt the moſt dreadful. It is made up of ſhame from the ſenſe of the impropriety of paſt conduct; of grief for the effects of it; of pity for thoſe who ſuffer by it; and of the dread and terror of puniſhment from the conſciouſneſs of the juſtly provoked reſentment of all rational creatures.

The oppoſite behaviour naturally inſpires the oppoſite ſentiment. The man who, not from frivolous fancy, but from proper motives, has performed a generous action, when he looks forward to thoſe whom he has ſerved, feels himſelf to be the natural object of their love and gratitude, and, by ſympathy with them, of the eſteem and approbation of all mankind. And when he looks backward to the motive from which he acted, and ſurveys it in the light in which the indifferent ſpectator will ſurvey it, he ſtill continues to enter into it, and applauds himſelf by ſympathy with the approbation of this ſuppoſed impartial judge. In both theſe points of view his own conduct appears to him every

way agreeable. His mind, at the thought of it, is filled with chearfulneſs, ſerenity, and compoſure. He is in friendſhip and harmony with all mankind, and looks upon his fellow-creatures with confidence and benevolent ſatisfaction, ſecure that he has rendered himſelf worthy of their moſt favourable regards. In the combination of all theſe ſentiments conſiſts the conſciouſneſs of merit, or of deſerved reward.

CHAP. III.

Of the utility of this conſtitution of nature.

IT is thus that man, who can ſubſiſt only in ſociety, was fitted by nature to that ſituation for which he was made. All the members of human ſociety ſtand in need of each others aſſiſtance, and are likewiſe expoſed to mutual injuries. Where the neceſſary aſſiſtance is reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendſhip and eſteem, the ſociety flouriſhes and is happy. All the different members of it are bound together by the agreeable bands of love and affection, and are, as it were, drawn to one common centre of mutual good offices.

But though the neceſſary aſſiſtance ſhould not be afforded from ſuch generous and diſintereſted motives, though among the different members of the ſociety there ſhould be no mutual love and affection, the ſociety, though

leſs

leſs happy and agreeable, will not neceſſarily be diſſolved. Society may ſubſiſt among different men, as among different merchants, from a ſenſe of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it ſhould owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may ſtill be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation.

Society, however, cannot ſubſiſt among thoſe who are at all times ready to hurt and injure one another. The moment that injury begins, the moment that mutual reſentment and animoſity take place, all the bands of it are broke aſunder, and the different members of which it conſiſted are, as it were, diſſipated and ſcattered abroad by the violence and oppoſition of their diſcordant affections. If there is any ſociety among robbers and murderers, they muſt at leaſt, according to the trite obſervation, abſtain from robbing and murdering one another. Beneficence, therefore, is leſs eſſential to the exiſtence of ſociety than juſtice. Society may ſubſiſt, though not in the moſt comfortable ſtate, without beneficence; but the prevalence of injuſtice muſt utterly deſtroy it.

Though nature, therefore, exhorts mankind to acts of beneficence, by the pleaſing conſciouſneſs of deſerved reward, ſhe has not thought it neceſſary to guard and enforce the practice of it by the terrors of merited puniſhment in caſe it ſhould be neglected. It is the ornament which embelliſhes, not

the foundation which ſupports the building, and which it was, therefore, ſufficient to recommend, but by no means neceſſary to impoſe. Juſtice, on the contrary, is the main pillar that upholds the whole edifice. If it is removed, the great, the immenſe fabric of human ſociety, that fabric which to raiſe and ſupport ſeems in this world, if I may ſay ſo, to have been the peculiar and darling care of nature, muſt in a moment crumble into atoms. In order to enforce the obſervation of juſtice, therefore, nature has implanted in the human breaſt that conſciouſneſs of ill-deſert, thoſe terrors of merited puniſhment which attend upon its violation, as the great ſafe-guards of the aſſociation of mankind, to protect the weak, to curb the violent, and to chaſtize the guilty. Men, though naturally ſympathetic, feel ſo little for another, with whom they have no particular connection, in compariſon of what they feel for themſelves; the miſery of one, who is merely their fellow-creature, is of ſo little importance to them in compariſon even of a ſmall conveniency of their own; they have it ſo much in their power to hurt him, and may have ſo many temptations to do ſo, that if this principle did not ſtand up within them in his defence, and overawe them into a reſpect for his innocence, they would, like wild beaſts, be at all times ready to fly upon him; and a man would enter an aſſembly of men as he enters a den of lions.

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In every part of the universe we observe means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce; and in the mechanism of a plant, or animal body, admire how every thing is contrived for advancing the two great purposes of nature, the support of the individual, and the propagation of the species. But in these, and in all such objects, we still distinguish the efficient from the final cause of their several motions and organizations. The digestion of the food, the circulation of the blood, and the secretion of the several juices which are drawn from it, are operations all of them necessary for the great purposes of animal life. Yet we never endeavour to account for them from those purposes as from their efficient causes, nor imagine that the blood circulates, or that the food digests of its own accord, and with a view or intention to the purposes of circulation or digestion. The wheels of the watch are all admirably adjusted to the end for which it was made, the pointing of the hour. All their various motions conspire in the nicest manner to produce this effect. If they were endowed with a desire and intention to produce it, they could not do it better. Yet we never ascribe any such desire or intention to them, but to the watch-maker, and we know that they are put into motion by a spring, which intends the effect it produces as little as they do. But though, in accounting for the operations of bodies, we never fail to distinguish in this manner the

efficient from the final cause, in accounting for those of the mind we are very apt to confound these two different things with one another. When by natural principles we are led to advance those ends, which a refined and enlightened reason would recommend to us, we are very apt to impute to that reason, as to their efficient cause, the sentiments and actions by which we advance those ends, and to imagine that to be the wisdom of man, which in reality is the wisdom of God. Upon a superficial view this cause seems sufficient to produce the effects which are ascribed to it; and the system of human nature seems to be more simple and agreeable when all its different operations are in this manner deduced from a single principle.

As society cannot subsist unless the laws of justice are tolerably observed, as no social intercourse can take place among men who do not generally abstain from injuring one another; the consideration of this necessity, it has been thought, was the ground upon which we approved of the enforcement of the laws of justice by the punishment of those who violated them. Man, it has been said, has a natural love for society, and desires that the union of mankind should be preserved for its own sake, and though he himself was to derive no benefit from it. The orderly and flourishing state of society is agreeable to him, and he takes delight in contemplating it. 'Tis disorder and confusion, on the contrary, is the object of his aversion, and he is cha-

grined at whatever tends to produce it. He is ſenſible too that his own intereſt is connected with the proſperity of ſociety, and that the happineſs, perhaps the preſervation of his exiſtence, depends upon its preſervation. Upon every account, therefore, he has an abhorrence at whatever can tend to deſtroy ſociety, and is willing to make uſe of every means, which can hinder ſo hated, and ſo dreadful an event. Injuſtice neceſſarily tends to deſtroy it. Every appearance of injuſtice, therefore, alarms him, and he runs, if I may ſay ſo, to ſtop the progreſs of what, if allowed to go on, would quickly put an end to every thing that is dear to him. If he cannot reſtrain it by gentle and fair means, he muſt beat it down by force and violence, and at any rate muſt put a ſtop to its further progreſs. Hence it is, they ſay, that he often approves of the enforcement of the laws of juſtice even by the capital puniſhment of thoſe who violate them. The diſturber of the public peace is hereby removed out of the world, and others are terrified by his fate from imitating his example.

Such is the account commonly given of our approbation of the puniſhment of injuſtice. And ſo far this account is undoubtedly true that we frequently have occaſion to confirm our natural ſenſe of the propriety and fitneſs of puniſhment by reflecting how neceſſary it is for preſerving the order of ſociety. When the guilty is about to ſuffer that juſt retaliation, which the natural indignation of man-

kind tells them is due to his crimes; when the insolence of his injustice is broken and humbled by the terror of his approaching punishment; when he ceases to be an object of fear, with the generous and humane he begins to be an object of pity. The thought of what he is about to suffer extinguishes their resentment for the sufferings of others to which he has given occasion. They are disposed to pardon and forgive him, and to save him from that punishment which in all their cool hours they had considered as the retribution due to such crimes. Here, therefore, they have occasion to call to their assistance the consideration of the general interest of society. They counterbalance the impulse of this weak and partial humanity by the dictates of a humanity that is more generous and comprehensive. They reflect that mercy to the guilty is cruelty to the innocent, and oppose to the emotions of compassion which they feel for a particular person, a more enlarged compassion, which they feel for mankind.

Sometimes too we have occasion to defend the propriety of observing the general rules of justice by the consideration of their necessity to the support of society. We frequently hear the young and the licentious ridiculing the most sacred rules of morality, and professing, sometimes from the corruption, but more frequently from the vanity of their hearts, the most abominable maxims of conduct. Our indignation rouses, and we are eager to refute and expose such detestable principles,

principles. But though it is their intrinſic hatefulneſs and deteſtableneſs, which originally inflames us againſt them, we are unwilling to aſſign this as the ſole reaſon why we condemn them, or to pretend that it is merely becauſe we ourſelves hate and deteſt them. The reaſon, we think, would not appear to be concluſive. Yet why ſhould it not; if we hate and deteſt them becauſe they are the natural and proper objects of hatred and deteſtation? But when we are aſked why we ſhould not act in ſuch or ſuch a manner, the very queſtion ſeems to ſuppoſe that, to thoſe who aſk it, this manner of acting does not appear to be for its own ſake the natural and proper object of thoſe ſentiments. We muſt ſhow them, therefore, that it ought to be ſo for the ſake of ſomething elſe. Upon this account we generally caſt about for other arguments, and the conſideration which firſt occurs to us is the diſorder and confuſion of ſociety which would reſult from the univerſal prevalence of ſuch practices. We ſeldom fail, therefore, to inſiſt upon this topic.

But though it commonly requires no great diſcernment to ſee the deſtructive tendency of all licentious practices to the welfare of ſociety, it is ſeldom this conſideration which firſt animates us againſt them. All men, even the moſt ſtupid and unthinking, abhor fraud, perfidy, and injuſtice, and delight to ſee them puniſhed. But few men have reflected upon the neceſſity of juſtice to the exiſtence of

of ſociety, how obvious ſoever that neceſſity may appear to be.

That it is not a regard to the preſervation of ſociety, which originally intereſts us in the puniſhment of crimes committed againſt individuals, may be demonſtrated by many obvious conſiderations. The concern which we take in the fortune and happineſs of individuals does not, in common caſes, ariſe from that which we take in the fortune and happineſs of ſociety. We are no more concerned for the deſtruction or loſs of a ſingle man, becauſe this man is a member or part of ſociety, and becauſe we ſhould be concerned for the deſtruction of ſociety, than we are concerned for the loſs of a ſingle guinea, becauſe this guinea is a part of a thouſand guineas, and becauſe we ſhould be concerned for the loſs of the whole ſum. In neither caſe does our regard for the individuals ariſe from our regard for the multitude; but in both caſes our regard for the multitude is compounded and made up of the particular regards which we feel for the different individuals of which it is compoſed. As when a ſmall ſum is unjuſtly taken from us we do not ſo much proſecute the injury from a regard to the preſervation of our whole fortune, as from a regard to that particular ſum which we have loſt; ſo when a ſingle man is injured or deſtroyed we demand the puniſhment of the wrong that has been done to him, not ſo much from a concern for the general intereſt of ſociety, as from a concern for that very individual

individual who has been injured. It is to be obſerved, however, that this concern does not neceſſarily include it in any degree of thoſe exquiſite ſentiments which are commonly called love, eſteem and affection, and by which we diſtinguiſh our particular friends and acquaintance. The concern which is requiſite for this is no more than the general fellow-feeling which we have with every man merely becauſe he is our fellow-creature. We enter into the reſentment even of an odious perſon, when he is injured by thoſe to whom he has given no provocation. Our diſapprobation of his ordinary character and conduct does not in this caſe altogether prevent our fellow-feeling with his natural indignation; though with thoſe who are not either extremely candid, or who have not been accuſtomed to correct and regulate their natural ſentiments by general rules, it is very apt to damp it.

Upon ſome occaſions, indeed, we both puniſh and approve of puniſhment, merely from a view to the general intereſt of ſociety, which, we imagine, cannot otherwiſe be ſecured. Of this kind are all the puniſhments inflicted for breaches of what is called either civil police, or military diſcipline. Such crimes do not immediately or directly hurt any particular perſon; but their remote conſequences, it is ſuppoſed, do produce, or might produce, either a conſiderable inconveniency, or a great diſorder in the ſociety. A centinel, for example, who falls aſleep upon his watch, ſuffers

ſuffers death by the laws of war, becauſe ſuch careleſſneſs might endanger the whole army. This ſeverity may, upon many occaſions, appear neceſſary, and, for that reaſon, juſt and proper. When the preſervation of an individual is inconſiſtent with the ſafety of a multitude, nothing can be more juſt than that the many ſhould be preferred to the one. Yet this puniſhment, how neceſſary ſoever, always appears to be exceſſively ſevere. The natural atrocity of the crime ſeems to be ſo little, and the puniſhment ſo great, that it is with great difficulty that our heart can reconcile itſelf to it. Though ſuch careleſſneſs appears very blameable, yet the thought of this crime does not naturally excite any ſuch reſentment, as would prompt us to take ſuch dreadful revenge. A man of humanity muſt recollect himſelf, muſt make an effort, and exert his whole firmneſs and reſolution, before he can bring himſelf either to inflict it, or to go along with it when it is inflicted by others. It is not, however, in this manner, that he looks upon the juſt puniſhment of an ungrateful murderer or parricide. His heart, in this caſe, applauds with ardour, and even with tranſport, the juſt retaliation which ſeems due to ſuch deteſtable crimes, and which, if, by any accident, they ſhould happen to eſcape, he would be highly enraged and diſappointed. The very different ſentiments with which the ſpectator views thoſe different puniſhments, is a proof that his approbation of the one is far from being founded upon

upon the ſame principles with that of the other. He looks upon the centinel as an unfortunate victim, who, indeed, muſt, and ought to be, devoted to the ſafety of numbers, but whom ſtill, in his heart, he would be glad to ſave; and he is only ſorry, that the intereſt of the many ſhould oppoſe it. But if the murderer ſhould eſcape from puniſhment, it would excite his higheſt indignation, and he would call upon God to avenge, in another world, that crime which the injuſtice of mankind had neglected to chaſtiſe upon earth.

For it well deſerves to be taken notice of, that we are ſo far from imagining that injuſtice ought to be puniſhed in this life, merely on account of the order of ſociety, which cannot otherwiſe be maintained, that nature teaches us to hope, and religion authoriſes us to expect, that it will be puniſhed, even in a life to come. Our ſenſe of its ill deſert purſues it, if I may ſay ſo, even beyond the grave, though the example of its puniſhment there cannot ſerve to deter the reſt of mankind, who ſee it not, who know it not, from being guilty of the like practices here. The juſtice of God, however, we think, ſtill requires, that he ſhould hereafter avenge the injuries of the widow and the fatherleſs, who are here ſo often inſulted with impunity.

That the Deity loves virtue and hates vice, as a voluptuous man loves riches and hates poverty, not for their own ſakes, but for the effects which they tend to produce; that he

loves the one, only becauſe it promotes the happineſs of ſociety, which his benevolence prompts him to deſire; and that he hates the other, only becauſe it occaſions the miſery of mankind, which the ſame divine quality renders the object of his averſion; is not the doctrine of nature, but of an artificial, though ingenious, refinement of philoſophy. All our natural ſentiments prompt us to believe, that as perfect virtue is ſuppoſed neceſſarily to appear to the Deity, as it does to us, for its own ſake, and without any further view, the natural and proper object of love and reward, ſo muſt vice, of hatred and puniſhment. That the gods neither reſent nor hurt, was the general maxim of all the different ſects of the ancient philoſophy: and if, by reſenting, be underſtood, that violent and diſorderly perturbation, which often diſtracts and confounds the human breaſt; or if, by hurting, be underſtood, the doing miſchief wantonly, and without regard to propriety or juſtice, ſuch weakneſs is undoubtedly unworthy of the divine perfection. But if it be meant, that vice does not appear to the Deity to be, for its own ſake, the object of abhorrence and averſion, and what, for its own ſake, it is fit and right ſhould be puniſhed, the truth of this maxim can, by no means, be ſo eaſily admitted. If we conſult our natural ſentiments, we are apt to fear, leſt, before the holineſs of God, vice ſhould appear to be more worthy of puniſhment than the weakneſs and imperfection of human virtue can ever

ever ſeem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the preſence of his fellow-creatures, he may even juſtly elevate himſelf, and may often have reaſon to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the ſtill greater imperfection of theirs. But the caſe is quite different when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To ſuch a being, he can ſcarce imagine, that his littleneſs and weakneſs ſhould ever ſeem to be the proper object, either of eſteem or of reward. But he can eaſily conceive, how the numberleſs violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, ſhould render him the proper object of averſion and puniſhment; neither can he ſee any reaſon why the divine indignation ſhould not be let looſe without any reſtraint, upon ſo vile an inſect, as he is ſenſible that he himſelf muſt appear to be. If he would ſtill hope for happineſs, he is conſcious that he cannot demand it from the juſtice, but that he muſt entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, ſorrow, humiliation, contrition at the thought of his paſt conduct, are, upon this account, the ſentiments which become him, and ſeem to be the only means which he has left for appeaſing that wrath which, he knows, he has juſtly provoked. He even diſtruſts the efficacy of all theſe, and naturally fears, leſt the wiſdom of God ſhould not, like the weakneſs of

of man, be prevailed upon to ſpare the crime, by the moſt importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other interceſſion, ſome other ſacrifice, ſome other atonement, he imagines muſt be made for him, beyond what he himſelf is capable of making, before the purity of the divine juſtice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide, in every reſpect, with thoſe original anticipations of nature; and, as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, ſo they ſhow us, at the ſame time, that the moſt powerful interceſſion has been made, and that the moſt dreadful atonement has been paid for our manifold tranſgreſſions and iniquities.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the influence of fortune upon the ſentiments of mankind, with regard to the merit or demerit of actions.

INTRODUCTION.

WHATEVER praiſe or blame can be due to any action, muſt belong either, firſt, to the intention or affection of the heart, from which it proceeds; or, ſecondly, to the external action or movement of the body, which this affection gives occaſion to; or laſt, to all the good or bad conſequences, which actually, and in fact, proceed from it. Theſe three different things conſtitute the whole nature and circumſtances of the action, and muſt be the foundation of whatever quality can belong to it.

That the two laſt of theſe three circumſtances cannot be the foundation of any praiſe or blame, is abundantly evident; nor has the contrary ever been aſſerted by any body. The external action or movement of the body is often the ſame in the moſt innocent and in the moſt blameable actions. He who ſhoots a bird, and he who ſhoots a man, both of them perform the ſame external movement: each of them draws the tricker of a gun. The conſequences which actually, and in fact, happen to proceed from any action,

tion, are, if poſſible, ſtill more indifferent either to praiſe or blame, than even the external movement of the body. As they depend, not upon the agent, but upon fortune, they cannot be the proper foundation for any ſentiment, of which his character and conduct are the objects.

The only conſequences for which he can be anſwerable, or by which he can deſerve either approbation or diſapprobation of any kind, are thoſe which were ſome way or other intended, or thoſe which, at leaſt, ſhow ſome agreeable or diſagreeable quality in the intention of the heart, from which he acted. To the intention or affection of the heart, therefore, to the propriety or impropriety, to the beneficence or hurtfulneſs of the deſign, all praiſe or blame, all approbation or diſapprobation of any kind, which can juſtly be beſtowed upon any action, muſt ultimately belong.

When this maxim is thus propoſed, in abſtract and general terms, there is no body who does not agree to it. It's ſelf-evident juſtice is acknowledged by all the world, and there is not a diſſenting voice among all mankind. Every body allows, that, how different ſoever the accidental, the unintended and unforeſeen conſequences of different actions, yet, if the intentions or affections from which they aroſe were, on the one hand, equally proper and equally beneficent, or, on the other, equally improper and equally malevolent, the merit or demerit of the actions is ſtill the ſame,

and the agent is equally the ſuitable object either of gratitude or of reſentment.

But how well ſoever we may ſeem to be perſuaded of the truth of this equitable maxim, when we conſider it after this manner, in abſtract, yet when we come to particular caſes, the actual conſequences which happen to proceed from any action, have a very great effect upon our ſentiments concerning its merit or demerit, and almoſt always either enhance or diminiſh our ſenſe of both. Scarce, in any one inſtance, perhaps, will our ſentiments be found, after examination, to be entirely regulated by this rule, which we all acknowledge ought entirely to regulate them.

This irregularity of ſentiment, which every body feels, which ſcarce any body is ſufficiently aware of, and which no body is willing to acknowledge, I proceed now to explain; and I ſhall conſider, firſt, the cauſe which gives occaſion to it, or the mechaniſm by which nature produces it; ſecondly, the extent of its influence; and, laſt of all, the end which it anſwers, or the purpoſe which the Author of nature ſeems to have intended by it.

CHAP. I.

Of the causes of this influence of fortune.

THE causes of pain and pleasure, whatever they are, or however they operate, seem to be the objects, which, in all animals, immediately excite those two passions of gratitude and resentment. They are excited by inanimated, as well as by animated objects. We are angry, for a moment, even at the stone that hurts us. A child beats it, a dog barks at it, a choleric man is apt to curse it. The least reflection, indeed, corrects this sentiment, and we soon become sensible, that what has no feeling is a very improper object of revenge. When the mischief, however, is very great, the object which caused it becomes disagreeable to us ever after, and we take pleasure to burn or destroy it. We should treat, in this manner, the instrument which had accidentally been the cause of the death of a friend, and we should often think ourselves guilty of a sort of inhumanity, if we neglected to vent this absurd sort of vengeance upon it.

We conceive, in the same manner, a sort of gratitude for those inanimated objects, which have been the causes of great, or frequent pleasure to us. The sailor, who, as soon as he got ashore, should mend his fire with the plank upon which he had just escaped

caped from a ſhipwreck, would ſeem to be guilty of an unnatural action. We ſhould expect that he would rather preſerve it with care and affection, as a monument that was, in ſome meaſure, dear to him. A man grows fond of a ſnuff-box, of a pen-knife, of a ſtaff which he has long made uſe of, and conceives ſomething like a real love and affection for them. If he breaks or loſes them, he is vexed out of all proportion to the value of the damage. The houſe which we have long lived in, the tree, whoſe verdure and ſhade we have long enjoyed, are both looked upon with a ſort of reſpect that ſeems due to ſuch benefactors. The decay of the one, or the ruin of the other, affects us with a kind of melancholy, though we ſhould ſuſtain no loſs by it. The Dryads and the Lares of the ancients, a ſort of genii of trees and houſes, were probably firſt ſuggeſted by this ſort of affection, which the authors of thoſe ſuperſtitions felt for ſuch objects, and which ſeemed unreaſonable, if there was nothing animated about them.

But, before any thing can be the proper object of gratitude or reſentment, it muſt not only be the cauſe of pleaſure or pain, it muſt likewiſe be capable of feeling them. Without this other quality, thoſe paſſions cannot vent themſelves with any ſort of ſatisfaction upon it. As they are excited by the cauſes of pleaſure and pain, ſo their gratification conſiſts in retaliating thoſe ſenſations upon what gave occaſion to them; which it is to no pur-

poſe to attempt upon what has no ſenſibility. Animals, therefore, are leſs improper objects of gratitude and reſentment than inanimated objects. The dog that bites, the ox that gores, are both of them puniſhed. If they have been the cauſes of the death of any perſon, neither the public, nor the relations of the ſlain, can be ſatisfied, unleſs they are put to death in their turn: nor is this merely for the ſecurity of the living, but, in ſome meaſure, to revenge the injury of the dead. Thoſe animals, on the contrary, that have been remarkably ſerviceable to their maſters, become the objects of a very lively gratitude. We are ſhocked at the brutality of that officer, mentioned in the Turkiſh Spy, who ſtabbed the horſe that had carried him a-croſs an arm of the ſea, leſt that animal ſhould afterwards diſtinguiſh ſome other perſon by a ſimilar adventure.

But, though animals are not only the cauſes of pleaſure and pain, but are alſo capable of feeling thoſe ſenſations, they are ſtill far from being compleat and perfect objects, either of gratitude or reſentment; and thoſe paſſions ſtill feel, that there is ſomething wanting to their entire gratification. What gratitude chiefly deſires, is not only to make the benefactor feel pleaſure in his turn, but to make him conſcious that he meets with this reward on account of his paſt conduct, to make him pleaſed with that conduct, and to ſatisfy him, that the perſon upon whom he beſtowed his good offices was not unworthy of them.

What

What most of all charms us in our benefactor, is the concord between his sentiments and our own, with regard to what interests us so nearly as the worth of our own character, and the esteem that is due to us. We are delighted to find a person who values us as we value ourselves, and distinguishes us from the rest of mankind, with an attention not unlike that with which we distinguish ourselves. To maintain in him these agreeable and flattering sentiments, is one of the chief ends proposed by the returns we are disposed to make to him. A generous mind often disdains the interested thought of extorting new favours from its benefactor, by what may be called the importunities of its gratitude. But to preserve and to increase his esteem, is an interest which the greatest mind does not think unworthy of its attention. And this is the foundation of what I formerly observed, that when we cannot enter into the motives of our benefactor, when his conduct and character appear unworthy of our approbation, let his services have been ever so great, our gratitude is always sensibly diminished. We are less flattered by the distinction; and to preserve the esteem of so weak, or so worthless a patron, seems to be an object which does not deserve to be pursued for its own sake.

The object, on the contrary, which resentment is chiefly intent upon, is not so much to make our enemy feel pain in his turn, as to make him conscious that he feels it upon account of his past conduct, to make him re-

pent of that conduct, and to make him ſenſible, that the perſon whom he injured did not deſerve to be treated in that manner. What chiefly enrages us againſt the man who injures or inſults us, is the little account which he ſeems to make of us, the unreaſonable preference which he gives to himſelf above us, and that abſurd ſelf-love, by which he ſeems to imagine, that other people may be ſacrificed at any time, to his conveniency or his humour. The glaring impropriety of this conduct, the groſs inſolence and injuſtice which it ſeems to involve in it, often ſhock and exaſperate us more than all the miſchief which we have ſuffered. To bring him back to a more juſt ſenſe of what is due to other people, to make him ſenſible of what he owes us, and of the wrong that he has done to us, is frequently the principal end propoſed in our revenge, which is always imperfect when it cannot accompliſh this. When our enemy appears to have done us no injury, when we are ſenſible that he acted quite properly, that, in his ſituation, we ſhould have done the ſame thing, and that we deſerved from him all the miſchief we met with; in that caſe, if we have the leaſt ſpark either of candour or juſtice, we can entertain no ſort of reſentment.

Before any thing, therefore, can be the compleat and proper object, either of gratitude or reſentment, it muſt poſſeſs three different qualifications. Firſt, it muſt be the cauſe of pleaſure in the one caſe, and of pain in

in the other. Secondly, it muſt be capable of feeling thoſe ſenſations. And, thirdly, it muſt not only have produced thoſe ſenſations, but it muſt have produced them from deſign, and from a deſign that is approved of in the one caſe, and diſapproved of in the other. It is by the firſt qualification, that any object is capable of exciting thoſe paſſions: it is by the ſecond, that it is in any reſpect capable of gratifying them: the third qualification is both neceſſary for their compleat ſatisfaction, and as it gives a pleaſure or pain that is both exquiſite and peculiar, it is likewiſe an additional exciting cauſe of thoſe paſſions.

As what gives pleaſure or pain, therefore, either in one way or another, is the ſole exciting cauſe of gratitude and reſentment; though the intentions of any perſon ſhould be ever ſo proper and beneficent, on the one hand, or ever ſo improper and malevolent on the other; yet, if he has failed in producing either the good or the evil which he intended, as one of the exciting cauſes is wanting in both caſes, leſs gratitude ſeems due to him in the one, and leſs reſentment in the other. And, on the contrary, though in the intentions of any perſon, there was either no laudable degree of benevolence on the one hand, or no blameable degree of malice on the other; yet, if his actions ſhould produce either great good or great evil, as one of the exciting cauſes takes place upon both theſe occaſions, ſome gratitude is apt to ariſe towards him in the one, and ſome reſentment in the other,

other. A ſhadow of merit ſeems to fall upon him in the firſt, a ſhadow of demerit in the ſecond. And, as the conſequences of actions are altogether under the empire of fortune, hence ariſes her influence upon the ſentiments of mankind, with regard to merit and demerit.

CHAP. II.

Of the extent of this influence of fortune.

THE effect of this influence of fortune is, firſt, to diminiſh our ſenſe of the merit or demerit of thoſe actions which aroſe from the moſt laudable or blameable intentions, when they fail of producing their propoſed effects: and, ſecondly, to increaſe our ſenſe of the merit or demerit of actions, beyond what is due to the motives or affections from which they proceed, when they accidentally give occaſion either to extraordinary pleaſure or pain.

I. Firſt, I ſay, though the intentions of any perſon ſhould be ever ſo proper and beneficent, on the one hand, or ever ſo improper and malevolent, on the other, yet, if they fail in producing their effects, his merit ſeems imperfect in the one caſe, and his demerit incompleat in the other. Nor is this irregularity of ſentiment felt only by thoſe who are immediately affected by the conſequences of any action. It is felt, in ſome meaſure, even by

by the impartial ſpectator. The man who ſolicits an office for another, without obtaining it, is regarded as his friend, and ſeems to deſerve his love and affection. But the man who not only ſollicits, but procures it, is more peculiarly conſidered as his patron and benefactor, and is intitled to his reſpect and gratitude. The perſon obliged, we are apt to think, may, with ſome juſtice, imagine himſelf on a level with the firſt: but we cannot enter into his ſentiments, if he does not feel himſelf inferior to the ſecond. It is common indeed to ſay, that we are equally obliged to the man who has endeavoured to ſerve us, as to him who actually did ſo. It is the ſpeech which we conſtantly make upon every unſucceſsful attempt of this kind; but which, like all other fine ſpeeches, muſt be underſtood with a grain of allowance. The ſentiments which a man of generoſity entertains for the friend who fails, may often indeed be nearly the ſame with thoſe which he conceives for him who ſucceeds: and the more generous he is, the more nearly will thoſe ſentiments approach to an exact level. With the truly generous, to be beloved, to be eſteemed by thoſe whom they themſelves think worthy of eſteem, gives more pleaſure, and thereby excites more gratitude, than all the advantages which they can ever expect from thoſe ſentiments. When they loſe thoſe advantages therefore, they ſeem to loſe but a trifle, which is ſcarce worth regarding. They ſtill however loſe ſomething. Their pleaſure therefore,

fore, and conſequently their gratitude, is not perfectly compleat: and accordingly if, between the friend who fails and the friend who ſucceeds, all other circumſtances are equal, there will, even in the nobleſt and the beſt mind, be ſome little difference of affection in favour of him who ſucceeds. Nay, ſo unjuſt are mankind in this reſpect, that though the intended benefit ſhould be procured, yet if it is not procured by the means of a particular benefactor, they are apt to think that leſs gratitude is due to the man, who with the beſt intentions in the world could do no more than help it a little forward. As their gratitude is in this caſe divided among the different perſons who contributed to their pleaſure, a ſmaller ſhare of it ſeems due to any one. Such a perſon, we hear men commonly ſay, intended no doubt to ſerve us; and we really believe exerted himſelf to the utmoſt of his abilities for that purpoſe. We are not, however, obliged to him for this benefit; ſince had it not been for the concurrence of others, all that he could have done would never have brought it about. This conſideration, they imagine, ſhould, even in the eyes of the impartial ſpectator, diminiſh the debt which they owe to him. The perſon himſelf who has unſucceſsfully endeavoured to confer a benefit, has by no means the ſame dependency upon the gratitude of the man whom he meant to oblige, nor the ſame ſenſe of his own merit towards him, which he would have had in the caſe of ſucceſs.

Even

Even the merit of talents and abilities which ſome accident has hindered from producing their effects, ſeems in ſome meaſure imperfect, even to thoſe who are fully convinced of their capacity to produce them. The general who has been hindered by the envy of miniſters from gaining ſome great advantage over the enemies of his country, regrets the loſs of the opportunity for ever after. Nor is it only upon account of the public that he regrets it. He laments that he was hindered from performing an action which would have added a new luſtre to his character in his own eyes, as well as in thoſe of every other perſon. It ſatisfies neither himſelf nor others to reflect that the plan or deſign was all that depended on him, that no greater capacity was required to execute it than what was neceſſary to concert it: that he was allowed to be every way capable of executing it, and that had he been permitted to go on, ſucceſs was infallible. He ſtill did not execute it; and though he might deſerve all the approbation which is due to a magnanimous and great deſign, he ſtill wanted the actual merit of having performed a great action. To take the management of any affair of public concern from the man who has almoſt brought it to a concluſion, is regarded as the moſt invidious injuſtice. As he had done ſo much, he ſhould, we think, have been allowed to acquire the compleat merit of putting an end to it. It was objected to Pompey, that he came in upon the victories of Lucullus, and gathered thoſe laurels which were

were due to the fortune and valour of another. The glory of Lucullus, it ſeems, was leſs compleat even in the opinion of his own friends, when he was not permitted to finiſh that conqueſt which his conduct and courage had put in the power of almoſt any man to finiſh. It mortifies an architect when his plans are either not executed at all, or when they are ſo far altered as to ſpoil the effect of the building. The plan, however, is all that depends upon the architect. The whole of his genius is, to good judges, as compleatly diſcovered in that as in the actual execution. But a plan does not, even to the moſt intelligent, give the ſame pleaſure as a noble and magnificent building. They may diſcover as much both of taſte and genius in the one as in the other. But their effects are ſtill vaſtly different, and the amuſement derived from the firſt, never approaches to the wonder and admiration which are ſometimes excited by the ſecond. We may believe of many men, that their talents are ſuperior to thoſe of Cæſar and Alexander; and that in the ſame ſituations they would perform ſtill greater actions. In the mean time, however, we do not behold them with that aſtoniſhment and admiration with which thoſe two heroes have been regarded in all ages and nations. The calm judgments of the mind may approve of them more, but they want the ſplendor of great actions to dazzle and tranſport it. The ſuperiority of virtues and talents have not, even upon thoſe who acknowledge that ſuperiority,

riority, the ſame effect with the ſuperiority of atchievements.

As the merit of an unſucceſsful attempt to do good ſeems thus, in the eyes of ungrateful mankind, to be diminiſhed by the miſcarriage, ſo does likewiſe the demerit of an unſucceſsful attempt to do evil. The deſign to commit a crime, how clearly ſoever it may be proved, is ſcarce ever puniſhed with the ſame ſeverity as the actual commiſſion of it. The caſe of treaſon is perhaps the only exception. That crime immediately affecting the being of the government itſelf, the government is naturally more jealous of it than of any other. In the puniſhment of treaſon, the ſovereign reſents the injuries which are immediately done to himſelf: in the puniſhment of other crimes, he reſents thoſe which are done to other men. It is his own reſentment which he indulges in the one caſe: it it that of his ſubjects which by ſympathy he enters into in the other. In the firſt caſe, therefore, as he judges in his own cauſe, he is very apt to be more violent and ſanguinary in his puniſhments than the impartial ſpectator can approve of. His reſentment too riſes here upon ſmaller occaſions, and does not always, as in other caſes, wait for the perpetration of the crime, or even for the attempt to commit it. A treaſonable concert, though nothing has been done, or even attempted in conſequence of it, nay, a treaſonable converſation, is in many countries puniſhed in the ſame manner as the actual commiſ-

commiſſion of treaſon. With regard to all other crimes, the mere deſign, upon which no attempt has followed, is ſeldom puniſhed at all, and is never puniſhed ſeverely. A criminal deſign, and a criminal action, it may be ſaid indeed, do not neceſſarily ſuppoſe the ſame degree of depravity, and ought not therefore to be ſubjected to the ſame puniſhment. We are capable, it may be ſaid, of reſolving, and even of taking meaſures to execute, many things which, when it comes to the point, we feel ourſelves altogether incapable of executing. But this reaſon can have no place when the deſign has been carried the length of the laſt attempt. The man however, who fires a piſtol at his enemy, but miſſes him, is puniſhed with death by the laws of ſcarce any country. By the old law of Scotland, tho' he ſhould wound him, yet, unleſs death enſues within a certain time, the aſſaſſine is not liable to the laſt puniſhment. The reſentment of mankind, however, runs ſo high againſt this crime, their terror for the man who ſhows himſelf capable of committing it is ſo great, that the mere attempt to commit it ought in all countries to be capital. The attempt to commit ſmaller crimes is almoſt always puniſhed very lightly, and ſometimes is not puniſhed at all. The thief, whoſe hand has been caught in his neighbour's pocket before he had taken any thing out of it, is puniſhed with ignominy only. If he had got time to take away an handkerchief, he would have been put to death. The houſe-breaker,

breaker, who has been found setting a ladder to his neighbour's window, but had not got into it, is not exposed to the capital punishment. The attempt to ravish is not punished as a rape. The attempt to seduce a married woman is not punished at all, though seduction is punished severely. Our resentment against the person who only attempted to do a mischief is seldom so strong as to bear us out in inflicting the same punishment upon him which we should have thought due if he had actually done it. In the one case, the joy of our deliverance alleviates our sense of the atrocity of his conduct; in the other, the grief for our misfortune increases it. His real demerit, however, is undoubtedly the same in both cases, since his intentions were equally criminal; and there is in this respect, therefore, an irregularity in the sentiments of all men, and a consequent relaxation of discipline in the laws of, I believe, all nations, of the most civilized, as well as of the most barbarous. The humanity of a civilized people disposes them either to dispense with, or to mitigate punishments wherever their natural indignation is not goaded on by the consequences of the crime. Barbarians, on the other hand, when no actual consequence has happened from any action, are not apt to be very delicate or inquisitive about the motives.

The person himself who either from passion, or from the influence of bad company, has resolved, and perhaps taken measures to perpetrate some crime, but who has fortu-

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nately been prevented by an accident which put it out of his power, is ſure, if he has any remains of conſcience, to regard this event all his life aſter as a great and ſignal deliverance. He can never think of it without returning thanks to Heaven for having been thus graciouſly pleaſed to ſave him from the guilt in which he was juſt ready to plunge himſelf, and to hinder him from rendering all the reſt of his life a ſcene of horror, remorſe, and repentance. But though his hands are innocent, he is conſcious that his heart is equally guilty as if he had actually executed what he was ſo fully reſolved upon. It gives great eaſe to his conſcience, however, to conſider that the crime was not executed, though he knows that the failure aroſe from no virtue in him. He ſtill conſiders himſelf as leſs deſerving of puniſhment and reſentment; and this good fortune either diminiſhes, or takes away altogether, all ſenſe of guilt. To remember how much he was reſolved upon it, has no other effect than to make him regard his eſcape as the greater and more miraculous: for he ſtill fancies that he has eſcaped, and he looks back upon the danger to which his peace of mind was expoſed, with that terror, with which one who is in ſafety may ſometimes remember the hazard he was in of falling over a precipice, and ſhudder with horror at the thought.

2. The ſecond effect of this influence of fortune, is to increaſe our ſenſe of the merit or demerit of actions beyond what is due to

the motives or affection from which they proceed, when they happen to give occasion to extraordinary pleasure or pain. The agreeable or disagreeable effects of the action often throw a shadow of merit or demerit upon the agent, though in his intention there was nothing that deserved either praise or blame, or at least that deserved them in the degree in which we are apt to bestow them. Thus, even the messenger of bad news is disagreeable to us, and, on the contrary, we feel a sort of gratitude for the man who brings us good tidings. For a moment we look upon them both as the authors, the one of our good, the other of our bad fortune, and regard them in some measure as if they had really brought about the events which they only give an account of. The first author of our joy is naturally the object of a transitory gratitude: we embrace him with warmth and affection, and should be glad, during the instant of our prosperity, to reward him as for some signal service. By the custom of all courts, the officer, who brings the news of a victory, is intitled to considerable preferments, and the general always chuses one of his principal favourites to go upon so agreeable an errand. The first author of our sorrow is, on the contrary, just as naturally the object of a transitory resentment. We can scarce avoid looking upon him with chagrine and uneasiness; and the rude and brutal are apt to vent upon him that spleen which his intelligence gives occasion to. Tigranes, King of Armenia,

ſtruck off the head of the man who brought him the firſt account of the approach of a formidable enemy. To puniſh in this manner the author of bad tidings, ſeems barbarous and inhuman: yet, to reward the meſſenger of good news, is not diſagreeable to us; we think it ſuitable to the bounty of kings. But why do we make this difference, ſince, if there is no fault in the one, neither is there any merit in the other? It is becauſe any ſort of reaſon ſeems ſufficient to authoriſe the exertion of the ſocial and benevolent affections; but it requires the moſt ſolid and ſubſtantial to make us enter into that of the unſocial and malevolent.

But though in general we are averſe to enter into the unſocial and malevolent affections, though we lay it down for a rule that we ought never to approve of their gratification unleſs ſo far as the malicious and unjuſt intention of the perſon, againſt whom they are directed, renders him their proper object; yet, upon ſome occaſions, we relax of this ſeverity. When the negligence of one man has occaſioned ſome unintended damage to another, we generally enter ſo far into the reſentment of the ſufferer, as to approve of his inflicting a puniſhment upon the offender much beyond what the offence will have appeared to deſerve, had no ſuch unlucky conſequence followed from it.

There is a degree of negligence, which would appear to deſerve ſome chaſtiſement though it ſhould occaſion no damage to any body. Thus, if

if a person should throw a large stone over a wall into a public street without giving warning to those who might be passing by, and without regarding where it was likely to fall, he would undoubtedly deserve some chastisement. A very accurate police would punish so absurd an action, even though it had done no mischief. The person who has been guilty of it, shows an insolent contempt of the happiness and safety of others. There is real injustice in his conduct. He wantonly exposes his neighbour to what no man in his senses would chuse to expose himself, and evidently wants that sense of what is due to his fellow-creatures which is the basis of justice and of society. Gross negligence therefore is, in the law, said to be almost equal to malicious design *. When any unlucky consequences happen from such carelessness, the person who has been guilty of it is often punished as if he had really intended those consequences; and his conduct, which was only thoughtless and insolent, and what deserved some chastisement, is considered as atrocious, and as liable to the severest punishment. Thus if, by the imprudent action above-mentioned, he should accidentally kill a man, he is, by the laws of many countries, particularly by the old law of Scotland, liable to the last punishment. And though this is no doubt excessively severe, it is not altogether inconsistent with our natural sentiments.

* Lata culpa prope dolum est.

Our juſt indignation againſt the folly and inhumanity of his conduct is exaſperated by our ſympathy with the unfortunate ſufferer. Nothing however would appear more ſhocking to our natural ſenſe of equity, than to bring a man to the ſcaffold merely for having thrown a ſtone careleſly into the ſtreet without hurting any body. The folly and inhumanity of his conduct, however, would in this caſe be the ſame; but ſtill our ſentiments would be very different. The conſideration of this difference may ſatisfy us how much the indignation, even of the ſpectator, is apt to be animated by the actual conſequences of the action. In caſes of this kind there will, if I am not miſtaken, be found a great degree of ſeverity in the laws of almoſt all nations; as I have already obſerved that in thoſe of an oppoſite kind there was a very general relaxation of diſcipline.

There is another degree of negligence which does not involve in it any ſort of injuſtice. The perſon who is guilty of it treats his neighbour as he treats himſelf, means no harm to any body, and is far from entertaining any inſolent contempt for the ſafety and happineſs of others. He is not, however, ſo careful and circumſpect in his conduct as he ought to be, and deſerves upon this account ſome degree of blame and cenſure, but no ſort of puniſhment. Yet if by a negligence * of this kind he ſhould occaſion ſome damage to another

* Culpa levis.

other

other person, he is by the laws of, I believe, all countries, obliged to compensate it. And though this is no doubt a real punishment, and what no mortal would have thought of inflicting upon him, had it not been for the unlucky accident which his conduct gave occasion to; yet this decision of the law is approved of by the natural sentiments of all mankind. Nothing, we think, can be more just than that one man should not suffer by the carelessness of another; and that the damage occasioned by blameable negligence should be made up by the person who was guilty of it.

There is another species of negligence *, which consists merely in a want of the most anxious timidity and circumspection, with regard to all the possible consequences of our actions. The want of this painful attention, when no bad consequences follow from it, is so far from being regarded as blameable, that the contrary quality is rather considered as such. That timid circumspection which is afraid of every thing, is never regarded as a virtue, but as a quality which more than any other incapacitates for action and business. Yet when, from a want of the excessive care, a person happens to occasion some damage to another, he is often by the law obliged to compensate it. Thus, by the Aquilian law, the man, who not being able to manage a horse that had accidentally taken fright, should happen to ride down his neighbour's slave, is

* Culpa levissima.

obliged to compenſate the damage. When an accident of this kind happens, we are apt to think that he ought not to have rode ſuch a horſe, and to regard his attempting it as an unpardonable levity; though without this accident we ſhould not only have made no ſuch reflection, but ſhould have regarded his refuſing it as the effect of timid weakneſs, and of an anxiety about merely poſſible events, which it is to no purpoſe to be aware of. The perſon himſelf, who by an accident even of this kind has involuntarily hurt another, ſeems to have ſome ſenſe of his own ill deſert, with regard to him. He naturally runs up to the ſufferer to expreſs his concern for what has happened, and to make every acknowledgment in his power. If he has any ſenſibility, he neceſſarily deſires to compenſate the damage, and to do every thing he can to appeaſe that animal reſentment, which he is ſenſible will be apt to ariſe in the breaſt of the ſufferer. To make no apology, to offer no atonement, is regarded as the higheſt brutality. Yet why ſhould he make an apology more than any other perſon? Why ſhould he, ſince he was equally innocent with any other by-ſtander, be thus ſingled out from among all mankind, to make up for the bad fortune of another? This taſk would ſurely never be impoſed upon him, did not even the impartial ſpectator feel ſome indulgence for what may be regarded as the unjuſt reſentment of that other.

CHAP. III.

Of the final cause of this irregularity of sentiments.

SUCH is the effect of the good or bad consequence of actions upon the sentiments both of the person who performs them, and of others; and thus, fortune, which governs the world, has some influence where we should be least willing to allow her any, and directs in some measure the sentiments of mankind, with regard to the character and conduct both of themselves and others. That the world judges by the event, and not by the design, has been in all ages the complaint, and is the great discouragement of virtue. Every body agrees to the general maxim, that as the event does not depend on the agent, it ought to have no influence upon our sentiments, with regard to the merit or propriety of his conduct. But when we come to particulars, we find that our sentiments are scarce in any one instance exactly comformable to what this equitable maxim would direct. The happy or unprosperous event of any action, is not only apt to give us a good or bad opinion of the prudence with which it was conducted, but almost always too animates our gratitude or resentment, our sense of the merit or demerit of the design.

Nature,

Nature, however, when ſhe implanted the ſeeds of this irregularity in the human breaſt, ſeems, as upon all other occaſions, to have intended the happineſs and perfection of the ſpecies. If the hurtfulneſs of the deſign, if the malevolence of the affection, were alone the cauſes which excited our reſentment, we ſhould feel all the furies of that paſſion againſt any perſon in whoſe breaſt we ſuſpected or believed ſuch deſigns or affections were harboured, though they had never broke out into any action. Sentiments, thoughts, intentions, would become the objects of puniſhment; and if the indignation of mankind run as high againſt them as againſt actions; if the baſeneſs of the thought which had given birth to no action, ſeemed in the eyes of the world as much to call aloud for vengeance as the baſeneſs of the action, every court of judicature would become a real inquiſition. There would be no ſafety for the moſt innocent and circumſpect conduct. Bad wiſhes, bad views, bad deſigns, might ſtill be ſuſpected; and while theſe excited the ſame indignation with bad conduct, while bad intentions were as much reſented as bad actions, they would equally expoſe the perſon to puniſhment and reſentment. Actions therefore which either produce actual evil, or attempt to produce it, and thereby put us in the immediate fear of it, are by the Author of nature rendered the only proper and approved objects of human puniſhment and reſentment. Sentiments, deſigns, affections, though it is from

from these that according to cool reason human actions derive their whole merit or demerit, are placed by the great Judge of hearts beyond the limits of every human jurisdiction, and are reserved for the cognizance of his own unerring tribunal. That necessary rule of justice, therefore, that men in this life are liable to punishment for their actions only, not for their designs and intentions, is founded upon this salutary and useful irregularity in human sentiments concerning merit or demerit, which at first sight appears so absurd and unaccountable. But every part of nature, when attentively surveyed, equally demonstrates the providential care of its author, and we may admire the wisdom and goodness of God even in the weakness and folly of men.

Nor is that irregularity of sentiments altogether without its utility, by which the merit of an unsuccessful attempt to serve, and much more that of meer good inclinations and kind wishes, appears to be imperfect. Man was made for action, and to promote by the exertion of his faculties such changes in the external circumstances both of himself and others, as may seem most favourable to the happiness of all. He must not be satisfied with indolent benevolence, nor fancy himself the friend of mankind, because in his heart he wishes well to the prosperity of the world. That he may call forth the whole vigour of his soul, and strain every nerve, in order to produce those ends which it is the purpose of his being to advance, nature has taught

taught him, that neither himſelf nor mankind can be fully ſatisfied with his conduct, nor beſtow upon it the full meaſure of applauſe, unleſs he has actually produced them. He is made to know, that the praiſe of good intentions, without the merit of good offices, will be but of little avail to excite either the loudeſt acclamations of the world, or even the higheſt degree of ſelf-applauſe. The man who has performed no ſingle action of importance, but whoſe whole converſation and deportment expreſs the juſtneſs, the nobleſt, and moſt generous ſentiments, can be intitled to demand no very high reward, even though his utility ſhould be owing to nothing but the want of an opportunity to ſerve. We can ſtill refuſe it him without blame. We can ſtill aſk him, What have you done? What actual ſervice can you produce, to intitle you to ſo great a recompence? We eſteem you, and love you; but we owe you nothing. To reward indeed that latent virtue which has been uſeleſs only for want of an opportunity to ſerve, to beſtow upon it thoſe honours and preferments, which, though in ſome meaſure it may be ſaid to deſerve them, it could not with propriety have inſiſted upon, is the effect of the moſt divine benevolence. To puniſh, on the contrary, for the affections of the heart only, where no crime has been committed, is the moſt inſolent and barbarous tyranny. The benevolent affections ſeem to deſerve moſt praiſe, when they do not wait till it becomes almoſt a crime for them not to exert

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exert themſelves. The malevolent, on the contrary, can ſcarce be too tardy, too ſlow or deliberate.

It is even of uſe that the evil which is done without deſign ſhould be regarded as a misfortune to the doer as well as to the ſufferer. Man is thereby taught to reverence the happineſs of his brethren, to tremble leſt he ſhould, even unknowingly, do any thing that can hurt them, and to dread that animal reſentment which he feels is ready to burſt out againſt him, if he ſhould without deſign be the unhappy inſtrument of their calamity.

Notwithſtanding, however, all theſe ſeeming irregularities of ſentiment, if man ſhould unfortunately either give occaſion to thoſe evils which he did not intend, or fail in producing that good which he intended, nature has not left his innocence altogether without conſolation, nor his virtue altogether without reward. He then calls to his aſſiſtance that juſt and equitable maxim, that thoſe events which did not depend upon our conduct ought not to diminiſh the eſteem that is due to us. He ſummons up his whole magnanimity and firmneſs of ſoul, and ſtrives to regard himſelf, not in the light in which he at preſent appears, but in that in which he ought to appear, in which he would have appeared had his generous deſigns been crowned with ſucceſs, and in which he would ſtill appear, notwithſtanding their miſcarriage, if the ſentiments of mankind were either altogether candid and equitable, or even perfectly conſiſtent with

with themſelves. The more candid and humane part of mankind intirely go along with the efforts which he thus makes to ſupport himſelf in his own opinion. They exert their whole generoſity and greatneſs of mind, to correct in themſelves this irregularity of human nature, and endeavour to regard his unfortunate magnanimity in the ſame light in which, had it been ſucceſsful, they would, without any ſuch generous exertion, have naturally been diſpoſed to conſider it.

PART

PART III.

Of the foundation of our judgments concerning our own ſentiments and conduct, and of the ſenſe of duty.

Conſiſting of one SECTION.

CHAP. I.

Of the conſciouſneſs of merited praiſe or blame.

IN the two foregoing parts of this diſcourſe, I have chiefly conſidered the origin and foundation of our judgments concerning the ſentiments and conduct of others. I come now to conſider the origin of thoſe concerning our own.

The deſire of the approbation and eſteem of thoſe we live with, which is of ſuch importance to our happineſs, cannot be fully and intirely contented but by rendering ourſelves the juſt and proper objects of thoſe ſentiments, and by adjuſting our own character and conduct according to thoſe meaſures and rules by which eſteem and approbation are naturally beſtowed. It is not ſufficient, that from ignorance or miſtake, eſteem and approbation ſhould ſome way or other be beſtowed upon us. If we are conſcious that we do

do not deſerve to be ſo favourably thought of, and that, if the truth was known, we ſhould be regarded with very oppoſite ſentiments, our ſatisfaction is far from being complete. The man who applauds us either for actions which we did not perform, or for motives which had no ſort of influence upon our conduct, applauds not us, but another perſon. We can derive no ſort of ſatisfaction from his praiſes. To us they ſhould be more mortifying than any cenſure, and ſhould perpetually call to our minds, the moſt humbling of all reflexions, the reflexion upon what we ought to be, but what we are not. A woman who paints to conceal her uglineſs, could derive, one ſhould imagine, but little vanity from the compliments that are paid to her beauty. Theſe, we ſhould expect, ought rather to put her in mind of the ſentiments which her real complexion would excite, and mortify her the more by the contraſt. To be pleaſed with ſuch groundleſs applauſe is a proof of the moſt ſuperficial levity and weakneſs. It is what is properly called vanity, and is the foundation of the moſt ridiculous and contemptible vices, the vices of affectation and common lying; follies which, if experience did not teach us how common they are, one ſhould imagine the leaſt ſpark of common ſenſe would ſave us from. The fooliſh lyar, who endeavours to excite the admiration of the company by the relation of adventures which never had any exiſtence, the important coxcomb who gives himſelf airs of rank and diſtinction which he well

well knows he has no just pretensions to, are both of them, no doubt, pleased with the applause which they fancy they meet with. But their vanity arises from so gross an illusion of the imagination, that it is difficult to conceive how any rational creature should be imposed upon by it. When they place themselves in the situation of those whom they fancy they have deceived, they are struck with the highest admiration for their own persons. They look upon themselves, not in that light in which, they know, they ought to appear to their companions, but in that in which they believe their companions actually look upon them. Their superficial weakness and trivial folly hinder them from ever turning their eyes inwards, or from seeing themselves in that despicable point of view in which their own consciences should tell them that they would appear to every body, if the real truth should ever come to be known.

As ignorant and groundless praise can give no solid joy, no satisfaction that will bear any serious examination, so, on the contrary, it often gives real comfort to reflect, that though no praise should actually be bestowed upon us, our conduct, however, has been such as to deserve it, and has been in every respect suitable to those measures and rules by which praise and approbation are naturally and commonly bestowed. We are pleased not only with praise, but with having done what is praise-worthy. We are pleased to think that we have rendered ourselves the natural objects

of approbation, though no approbation ſhould ever actually be beſtowed upon us: and we are mortified to reflect that we have juſtly incurred the blame of thoſe we live with, tho' that ſentiment ſhould never actually be exerted againſt us. The man who is conſcious to himſelf that he has exactly obſerved thoſe meaſures of conduct which experience informs him are generally agreeable, reflects with ſatisfaction on the propriety of his own behaviour; when he views it in the light in which the impartial ſpectator would view it, he thoroughly enters into all the motives which influenced it; he looks back upon every part of it with pleaſure and approbation, and though mankind ſhould never be acquainted with what he has done, he regards himſelf not ſo much according to the light in which they actually regard him, as according to that, in which they would regard him if they were better informed. He anticipates the applauſe and admiration which in this caſe would be beſtowed upon him, and he applauds and admires himſelf by ſympathy with ſentiments which do not indeed actually take place, but which the ignorance of the public alone hinders from taking place, which he knows are the natural and ordinary effects of ſuch conduct, which his imagination ſtrongly connects with it, and which he has acquired a habit of conceiving as ſomething that naturally and in propriety ought to flow from it. Men have often voluntarily thrown away life to acquire after death a renown which they could

could no longer enjoy. Their imagination, in the mean time, anticipated that fame which was thereafter to be bestowed upon them. Those applauses which they were never to hear rung in their ears. The thoughts of that admiration, whose effects they were never to feel, played about their hearts, banished from their breasts the strongest of all natural fears, and transported them to perform actions which seem almost beyond the reach of human nature. But in point of reality there is surely no great difference between that approbation which is not to be bestowed till we can no longer enjoy it, and that which indeed is never to be bestowed, but which would be bestowed if the world was ever made to understand properly the real circumstances of our behaviour. If the one often produces such violent effects, we cannot wonder that the other should always be highly regarded.

On the contrary, the man who has broke thro' all those measures of conduct, which can alone render him agreeable to mankind, tho' he should have the most perfect assurance that what he had done was for ever to be concealed from every human eye, it is all to no purpose. When he looks back upon it, and views it in the light in which the impartial spectator would view it, he finds that he can enter into none of the motives which influenced it. He is abashed and confounded at the thoughts of it, and necessarily feels a very high degree of that shame which he would be exposed to, if his actions should ever come to be generally

known. His imagination, in this caſe too, anticipates the contempt and deriſion from which nothing ſaves him but the ignorance of thoſe he lives with. He ſtill feels that he is the natural object of theſe ſentiments, and ſtill trembles at the thought of what he would ſuffer if they were ever actually exerted againſt him. But if what he had been guilty of was not merely one of thoſe improprieties which are the objects of ſimple diſapprobation, but one of thoſe enormous crimes which excite deteſtation and reſentment, he could never think of it, as long as he had any ſenſibility left, without feeling all the agony of horror and remorſe; and though he could be aſſured that no man was ever to know it, and could even bring himſelf to believe that there was no God to revenge it, he would ſtill feel enough of both theſe ſentiments to embitter the whole of his life: He would ſtill regard himſelf as the natural object of the hatred and indignation of all his fellow-creatures; and if his heart was not grown callous by the habit of crimes, he could not think without terror and aſtoniſhment even of the manner, in which mankind would look upon him, of what would be the expreſſion of their countenance and of their eyes, if the dreadful truth ſhould ever come to be known. Theſe natural pangs of an affrighted conſcience are the dæmons, the avenging furies which in this life haunt the guilty, which allow them neither quiet nor repoſe, which often drive them to deſpair and diſtraction, from which no aſſu-

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rance of ſecrecy can protect them, from which no principles of irreligion can entirely deliver them, and from which nothing can free them but the vileſt and moſt abject of all ſtates, a compleat inſenſibility to honour and infamy, to vice and virtue. Men of the moſt deteſtable characters, who, in the execution of the moſt dreadful crimes, had taken their meaſures ſo coolly as to avoid even the ſuſpicion of guilt, have ſometimes been driven by the horror of their ſituation, to diſcover of their own accord, what no human ſagacity could ever have inveſtigated. By acknowledging their guilt, by ſubmitting themſelves to the reſentment of their offended citizens, and by thus ſatiating that vengeance of which they were ſenſible that they were become the proper objects, they hoped by their death to reconcile themſelves, at leaſt in their own imagination, to the natural ſentiments of mankind, to be able to conſider themſelves as leſs worthy of hatred and reſentment, to attone in ſome meaſure for their crimes, and, if poſſible, to die in peace and with the forgiveneſs of all their fellow-creatures. Compared to what they felt before the diſcovery, even the thought of this, it ſeems, was happineſs.

CHAP. II.

In what manner our own judgments refer to what ought to be the judgments of others: and of the origin of general rules.

A Great part, perhaps the greateſt part, of human happineſs and miſery ariſes from the view of our paſt conduct, and from the degree of approbation or diſapprobation which we feel from the conſideration of it. But in whatever manner it may affect us, our ſentiments of this kind have always ſome ſecret reference either to what are, or to what upon a certain condition would be, or to what we imagine ought to be the ſentiments of others. We examine it as we imagine an impartial ſpectator would examine it. If upon placing ourſelves in his ſituation we thoroughly enter into all the paſſions and motives which influenced it, we approve of it by ſympathy with the approbation of this ſuppoſed equitable judge. If otherwiſe, we enter into his diſapprobation and condemn it.

Was it poſſible that a human creature could grow up to manhood in ſome ſolitary place without any communication with his own ſpecies, he could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own ſentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All theſe are

are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at; and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and when they disapprove of his sentiments; and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind. To a man who from his birth was a stranger to society, the objects of his passions, the external bodies which either pleased or hurt him, would occupy his whole attention. The passions themselves, the desires or aversions, the joys or sorrows, which those objects excited, though of all things the most immediately present to him, could scarce ever be the objects of his thoughts. The idea of them could never interest him so much as to call upon his attentive consideration. The consideration of his joy could in him excite no new joy, nor that of his sorrow any new sorrow, though the consideration of the causes of those passions might often excite both. Bring him into society, and all his own passions will immediately become the causes of new passions. He will observe that mankind approve of some of them, and are disgusted by others. He will be elevated in the one case, and cast down in the other; his desires and aversions, his joys and

ſorrows will now often become the cauſes of new deſires and new averſions, new joys and new ſorrows: they will now therefore intereſt him deeply, and often call upon his moſt attentive conſideration.

Our firſt ideas of perſonal beauty and deformity, are drawn from the ſhape and appearance of others, not from our own. We ſoon become ſenſible, however, that others exerciſe the ſame criticiſm upon us. We are pleaſed when they approve of our figure, and are diſobliged when they ſeem to be diſguſted. We become anxious to know how far our appearance deſerves either their blame or approbation. We examine our own perſons limb by limb, and by placing ourſelves before a looking-glaſs, or by ſome ſuch expedient, endeavour, as much as poſſible, to view ourſelves at the diſtance and with the eyes of other people. If after this examination we are ſatisfied with our own appearance, we can more eaſily ſupport the moſt diſadvantageous judgments of others: if, on the contrary, we are ſenſible that we are the natural objects of diſtaſte, every appearance of their diſapprobation mortifies us beyond all meaſure. A man who is tolerably handſome, will allow you to laugh at any little irregularity in his perſon; but all ſuch jokes are commonly inſupportable to one who is really deformed. It is evident, however, that we are anxious about our own beauty and deformity, only upon account of its effect upon others. If we had no connection

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tion with ſociety, we ſhould be altogether indifferent about either.

In the ſame manner our firſt moral criticiſms are exerciſed upon the characters and conduct of other people; and we are all very forward to obſerve how each of theſe affects us. But we ſoon learn, that others are equally frank with regard to our own. We become anxious to know how far we deſerve their cenſure or applauſe, and whether to them we muſt neceſſarily appear thoſe agreeable or diſagreeable creatures which they repreſent us. We begin upon this account to examine our own paſſions and conduct, and to conſider how theſe muſt appear to them, by conſidering how they would appear to us if in their ſituation. We ſuppoſe ourſelves the ſpectators of our own behaviour, and endeavour to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us. This is the only looking-glaſs by which we can, in ſome meaſure, with the eyes of others, ſcrutinize the propriety of our own conduct. If in this view it pleaſes us, we are tolerably ſatisfied. We can be more indifferent about the applauſe, and, in ſome meaſure, deſpiſe the cenſure of others; ſecure that, however miſunderſtood or miſrepreſented, we are the natural and proper objects of approbation. On the contrary, if we are pleaſed with it, we are often upon that very account more anxious to gain their approbation, and, provided we have not already, as they ſay, ſhaken hands with infamy, we are altogether diſtracted at the thoughts of their displeased

their cenſure, which then ſtrikes us with double ſeverity.

When I endeavour to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to paſs ſentence upon it, and either to approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all ſuch caſes, I divide myſelf, as it were, into two perſons, and that I, the examiner and judge, repreſent a different character from that other I, the perſon whoſe conduct is examined into and judged of. The firſt is the ſpectator, whoſe ſentiments with regard to my own conduct I endeavour to enter into, by placing myſelf in his ſituation, and by conſidering how it would appear to me when ſeen from that particular point of view. The ſecond is the agent, the perſon whom I properly call myſelf, and of whoſe conduct, under the character of a ſpectator, I was endeavouring to form ſome opinion. The firſt is the judge; the ſecond the pannel. But that the judge ſhould, in every reſpect, be the ſame with the pannel, is as impoſſible, as that the cauſe ſhould, in every reſpect, be the ſame with the effect.

To be amiable and to be meritorious, that is, to deſerve love and to deſerve reward, are the great characters of virtue, and to be odious and puniſhable, of vice. But all theſe characters have an immediate reference to the ſentiments of others. Virtue is not ſaid to be amiable or to be meritorious, becauſe it is the object of its own love, or of its own gratitude; but becauſe it excites thoſe ſentiments in other men. The conſciouſneſs that it is the

the object of ſuch favourable regards is the ſource of that inward tranquillity and ſelf-ſatisfaction with which it is naturally attended, as the ſuſpicion of the contrary gives occaſion to the torments of vice. What ſo great happineſs as to be beloved, and to know that we deſerve to be beloved? What ſo great miſery as to be hated, and to know that we deſerve to be hated?

Man is conſidered as a moral, becauſe he is regarded as an accountable being. But an accountable being, as the word expreſſes, is a being that muſt give an account of its actions to ſome other, and that conſequently muſt regulate them according to the good liking of this other. Man is accountable to God and his fellow-creatures. But though he is, no doubt, principally accountable to God, in the order of time, he muſt neceſſarily conceive himſelf as accountable to his fellow-creatures, before he can form any idea of the Deity, or of the rules by which that divine being will judge of his conduct. A child ſurely conceives itſelf as accountable to its parents, and is elevated or caſt down by the thought of their merited approbation or diſapprobation, long before it forms any idea of its accountableneſs to the Deity, or of the rules by which that divine being will judge of its conduct.

The great judge of the world, has, for the wiſeſt reaſons, thought proper to interpoſe, between the weak eye of human reaſon, and the throne of his eternal juſtice, a degree of obſcurity and darkneſs, which though it does

does not intirely cover that great tribunal from the view of mankind, yet renders the impreſſion of it faint and feeble in compariſon of what might be expected from the grandeur and importance of ſo mighty an object. If thoſe infinite rewards and puniſhments which the Almighty has prepared for thoſe who obey or tranſgreſs his will, were perceived as diſtinctly as we foreſee the frivolous and temporary relations which we may expect from one another, the weakneſs of human nature, aſtoniſhed at the immenſity of objects ſo little fitted to its comprehenſion, could no longer attend to the little affairs of this world; and it is abſolutely impoſſible that the buſineſs of ſociety could have been carried on, if, in this reſpect, there had been a fuller revelation of the intentions of providence than that which has already been made. That men, however, might never be without a rule to direct their conduct by, nor without a judge whoſe authority ſhould enforce its obſervation, the author of nature has made man the immediate judge of mankind, and has, in this reſpect, as in many others, created him after his own image, and appointed him his vicegerent upon earth to ſuperintend the behaviour of his brethren. They are taught by nature to acknowledge that power and juriſdiction which has thus been conferred upon him, and to tremble and exult according as they imagine that they have either merited his cenſure, or deſerved his applauſe.

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But whatever may be the authority of this inferiour tribunal which is continually before their eyes, if at any time it ſhould decide contrary to thoſe principles and rules, which nature has eſtabliſhed for regulating its judgments, men feel that they may appeal from this unjuſt deciſion, and call upon a ſuperiour tribunal, the tribunal eſtabliſhed in their own breaſts, to redreſs the injuſtice of this weak or partial judgment.

There are certain principles eſtabliſhed by nature for governing our judgments concerning the conduct of thoſe we live with. As long as we decide according to thoſe principles, and neither applaud nor condemn any thing which nature has not rendered the proper object of applauſe or condemnation, nor any further than ſhe has rendered it ſuch, as our ſentence is, in this caſe, if I may ſay ſo, quite agreeable to law, it is liable neither to repeal nor to correction of any kind. The perſon concerning whom we form theſe judgments, muſt himſelf neceſſarily approve of them. When he puts himſelf into our ſituation, he cannot avoid viewing his own conduct in the very ſame light in which we appear to view it. He is ſenſible, that to us, and to every impartial ſpectator, he muſt neceſſarily appear the natural and proper object of thoſe ſentiments which we expreſs with regard to him. Thoſe ſentiments, therefore, muſt neceſſarily produce their full effect upon him, and he cannot fail to conceive

ceive all the triumph of ſelf-approbation from, what appears to him, ſuch merited applauſe, as well as all the horrors of ſhame from, what, he is ſenſible, is ſuch deſerved condemnation.

But it is otherwiſe, if we have either applauded or condemned him, contrary to thoſe principles and rules which nature has eſtabliſhed for the direction of our judgments concerning every thing of this kind. If we have either applauded or condemned him for what, when he puts himſelf into our ſituation, does not appear to him to be the object either of applauſe or condemnation; as in this caſe he cannot enter into our ſentiments, provided he has any conſtancy or firmneſs, he is but little affected by them, and can neither be much elevated by the favourable, nor greatly mortified by the unfavourable deciſion. The applauſe of the whole world will avail but little, if our own conſcience condemn us; and the diſapprobation of all mankind is not capable of oppreſſing us, when we are abſolved by the tribunal within our own breaſt, and when our own mind tells us that mankind are in the wrong.

But though this tribunal within the breaſt be thus the ſupreme arbiter of all our actions, though it can reverſe the deciſions of all mankind with regard to our character and conduct, and mortify us amidſt the applauſe, or ſupport us under the cenſure of the world; yet, if we enquire into the origin of its inſtitution,

tution, its jurisdiction we shall find is in a great measure derived from the authority of that very tribunal, whose decisions it so often and so justly reverses.

When we first come into the world, from the natural desire to please, we accustom ourselves to consider what behaviour is likely to be agreeable to every person we converse with, to our parents, to our masters, to our companions. We address ourselves to individuals, and for some time fondly pursue the impossible and absurd project of gaining the good-will and approbation of every body. We are soon taught by experience, however, that this universal approbation is altogether unattainable. As soon as we come to have more important interests to manage, we find, that by pleasing one man, we almost certainly disoblige another, and that by humouring an individual, we may often irritate a whole people. The fairest and most equitable conduct must frequently obstruct the interests, or thwart the inclinations of particular persons, who will seldom have candour enough to enter into the propriety of our motives, or to see that this conduct, how disagreeable soever to them, is perfectly suitable to our situation. In order to defend ourselves from such partial judgments, we soon learn to set up in our own minds a judge between ourselves and those we live with. We conceive ourselves as acting in the presence of a person quite candid and equitable, of one who has no particular relation either to ourselves, or to those whose

whose interests are affected by our conduct, who is neither father, nor brother, nor friend either to them or to us, but is merely a man in general, an impartial spectator who considers our conduct with the same indifference with which we regard that of other people. If, when we place ourselves in the situation of such a person, our own actions appear to us under an agreeable aspect, if we feel that such a spectator cannot avoid entering into all the motives which influenced us, whatever may be the judgments of the world, we must still be pleased with our own behaviour, and regard ourselves, in spite of the censure of our companions, as the just and proper objects of approbation.

On the contrary, if the man within condemns us, the loudest acclamations of mankind appear but as the noise of ignorance and folly, and whenever we assume the character of this impartial judge, we cannot avoid viewing our own actions with his distaste and dissatisfaction. The weak, the vain, and the frivolous, indeed, may be mortified by the most groundless censure, or elated by the most absurd applause. Such persons are not accustomed to consult the judge within concerning the opinion which they ought to form of their own conduct. This inmate of the breast, this abstract man, the representative of mankind, and substitute of the Deity, whom nature has constituted the supreme judge of all their actions, is seldom appealed to by them. They are contented with the decision of the inferiour

tribunal. The approbation of their companions, of the particular persons whom they have lived and conversed with, has generally been the ultimate object of all their wishes. If they obtain this, their joy is compleat; and if they fail, they are entirely disappointed. They never think of appealing to the superior court. They have seldom enquired after its decisions, and are altogether unacquainted with the rules and forms of its procedure. When the world injures them, therefore, they are incapable of doing themselves justice, and are, in consequence, necessarily the slaves of the world. But it is otherwise with the man who has, upon all occasions, been accustomed to have recourse to the judge within, and to consider, not what the world approves or disapproves of, but what appears to this impartial spectator, the natural and proper object of approbation or disapprobation. The judgment of this supreme arbiter of his conduct, is the applause, which he has been accustomed principally to court, is the censure which he has been accustomed principally to fear. Compared with this final decision, the sentiments of all mankind, though not altogether indifferent, appear to be but of small moment; and he is incapable of being either much elevated by their favourable, or greatly depressed by their most disadvantageous judgment.

It is only by consulting this judge within, that we can see whatever relates to ourselves in its proper shape and dimensions, or that

we can make any proper comparison between our own interests and those of other men.

As to the eye of the body, objects appear great or small, not so much according to their real dimensions, as according to the nearness or distance of their situation; so do they likewise to what may be called the natural eye of the mind: and we remedy the defects of both these organs pretty much in the same manner. In my present situation an immense landscape of lawns, and woods, and distant mountains, seems to do no more than cover the little window which I write by, and to be out of all proportion less than the chamber in which I am sitting. I can form a just comparison between those great objects and the little objects around me, in no other way, than by transporting myself, at least in fancy, to a different station, from whence I can survey both at nearly equal distances, and thereby form some judgment of their real proportions. Habit and experience have taught me to do this so easily and so readily, that I am scarce sensible that I do it; and a man must be, in some measure, acquainted with the philosophy of vision, before he can be thoroughly convinced, how little those distant objects would appear to the eye, if the imagination, from a knowledge of their real magnitudes, did not swell and dilate them.

In the same manner, to the selfish and original passions of human nature, the loss or gain of a very small interest of our own, appears to be of vastly more importance, excites

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a much more passionate joy or sorrow, a much more ardent desire or aversion, than the greatest concern of another with whom we have no particular connexion. His interests, as long as they are surveyed from this station, can never be put into the ballance with our own, can never restrain us from doing whatever may tend to promote our own, how ruinous soever to him. Before we can make any proper comparison of those opposite interests, we must change our position. We must view them, neither from our own place, nor yet from his, neither with our own eyes, nor yet with his, but from the place, and with the eyes of a third person, who has no particular connection with either, and who judges with impartiality between us. Here too, habit and experience have taught us to this so easily and so readily, that we are scarce sensible that we do it; and it requires, in this case too, some degree of reflection, and even of philosophy to convince us, how little interest we should take in the greatest concerns of our neighbour, how little we should be affected by whatever relates to him, if the sense of propriety and justice did not correct the otherwise natural inequality of our sentiments.

Let us suppose that the great empire of China, with all its myriads of inhabitants, was suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake, and let us consider how a man of humanity in Europe, who had no sort of connection with that part of the world, would be affected upon

receiving intelligence of this dreadful calamity. He would, I imagine, first of all, express very strongly his sorrow for the misfortune of that unhappy people, he would make many melancholy reflections upon the precariousness of human life, and the vanity of all the labours of man, which could thus be annihilated in a moment. He would too, perhaps, if he was a man of speculation, enter into many reasonings concerning the effects which this disaster might produce upon the commerce of Europe, and the trade and business of the world in general. And when all this fine philosophy was over, when all these humane sentiments had been once fairly expressed, he would pursue his business or his pleasure, take his repose or his diversion with the same ease and tranquillity, as if no such accident had happened. The most frivolous disaster which could befal himself would occasion a more real disturbance. If he was to lose his little finger to-morrow, he would not sleep to-night; but provided he never saw them, he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of a hundred millions of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paultry misfortune of his own. To prevent, therefore, this paultry misfortune to himself would a man of humanity be willing to sacrifice the lives of a hundred millions of his brethren, provided he had never seen them? Human nature startles with horror at the thought, and

the world, in its greateſt depravity and corruption, never produced ſuch a villain as could be capable of entertaining it. But what makes this difference? When our paſſive feelings are almoſt always ſo ſordid and ſo ſelfiſh, how comes it that our active principles ſhould often be ſo generous and ſo noble? When we are always ſo much more deeply affected by whatever concerns ourſelves, than by whatever concerns other men; what is it which prompts the generous, upon all occaſions, and the mean upon many, to ſacrifice their own intereſts to the greater intereſts of others? It is not the ſoft power of humanity, it is not that feeble ſpark of benevolence which nature has lighted up in the human heart, that is thus capable of counteracting the ſtrongeſt impulſes of ſelf-love? It is a ſtronger power, a more forcible motive, which exerts itſelf upon ſuch occaſions. It is reaſon, principle, conſcience, the inhabitant of the breaſt, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. It is he, who, whenever we are about to act ſo as to affect the happineſs of others, calls to us with a voice capable of aſtoniſhing the moſt preſumptuous of our paſſions, that we are but one of the multitude, in no reſpect better than any other in it; and that when we prefer ourſelves ſo ſhamefully and ſo blindly to others, we become the proper objects of reſentment, abhorrence, and execration. It is from him only that we learn the real littleneſs of ourſelves, and of whatever relates to ourſelves, and the natural miſrepreſentations of

ſelf-love can be corrected only by the eye of this impartial ſpectator. It is he who ſhows us the propriety of generoſity and the deformity of injuſtice; the propriety of reſigning the greateſt intereſts of our own, for the yet greater intereſts of others, and the deformity of doing the ſmalleſt injury to another, in order to obtain the greateſt benefit to ourſelves. It is not the love of our neighbour, it is not the love of mankind, which upon many occaſions prompts us to the practice of thoſe divine virtues. It is a ſtronger love, a more powerful affection which generally takes place upon ſuch occaſions, the love of what is honourable and noble, of the grandeur and dignity, and ſuperiority of our own characters.

When the happineſs or miſery of others depends in any reſpect upon our conduct, we dare not, as ſelf-love would ſuggeſt to us, prefer any little intereſt of our own, to the yet greater intereſt of our neighbour. We feel that we ſhould become the proper objects of the reſentment and indignation of our brethren, and the ſenſe of the impropriety of this affection is ſupported and enlivened by the yet ſtronger ſenſe of the demerit of the action, which it would in this caſe give occaſion to. But when the happineſs or miſery of others in no reſpect depends upon our conduct, when our own intereſts are altogether ſeparated and detached from theirs, ſo that there is neither connection nor competition between them, as the ſenſe of demerit does not in this caſe

caſe interpoſe, the meer ſenſe of impropriety is ſeldom able to reſtrain us from abandoning ourſelves to our natural anxiety about our own affairs, and to our natural indifference about thoſe of other men. The moſt vulgar education teaches us to act, upon all important occaſions, with ſome ſort of impartiality between ourſelves and others, and even the ordinary commerce of the world is capable of adjuſting our active principles to ſome degree of propriety. But it is the moſt artificial and refined education only, which pretends to correct the inequalities of our paſſive feelings, and we muſt for this purpoſe have recourſe to the ſevereſt, as well as to the profoundeſt philoſophy.

Two different ſets of philoſophers have attempted to teach us this hardeſt of all the leſſons of morality. One ſet have laboured to encreaſe our ſenſibility to the intereſts of others; another to diminiſh that to our own. The firſt would have us feel for others as we naturally feel for ourſelves. The ſecond would have us feel for ourſelves, as we naturally feel for others.

The firſt are thoſe melancholy moraliſts, who are perpetually reproaching us with our happineſs, while ſo many of our brethren are in miſery, * who regard as impious the natural joy of proſperity, which does not think

* See Thomſon's Seaſons, Winter:
"Ah! little think the gay licentious proud," &c.
See alſo Paſcal.

of the many wretches that are at every inſtant labouring under all ſorts of calamities, in the languor of poverty, in the agony of diſeaſe, in the horrors of death, under the inſults and oppreſſion of their enemies. Commiſeration for thoſe miſeries which we never ſaw, which we never heard of, but which we may be aſſured are at all times infeſting ſuch numbers of our fellow-creatures, ought, they think, to damp the pleaſures of the fortunate, and to render a certain melancholy dejection habitual to all men. But firſt of all, this extreme ſympathy with misfortunes, which we know nothing about, ſeems altogether abſurd and unreaſonable. Take the whole earth at an average, for one man who ſuffers pain or miſery, you will find twenty in proſperity and joy, or at leaſt in tolerable circumſtances. No reaſon, ſurely, can be aſſigned why we ſhould rather weep with the one than rejoice with the twenty. This artificial commiſeration, beſides, is not only abſurd, but ſeems altogether unattainable; and thoſe who affect this character have commonly nothing but a certain hypocritical ſadneſs, which, without reaching the heart, ſerves only to render the countenance and converſation impertinently diſmal and diſagreeable. And laſt of all, this diſpoſition of mind, though it could be attained, would be perfectly uſeleſs, and could ſerve no other purpoſe than to render miſerable the perſon who was poſſeſſed of it. Whatever intereſt we take in the fortune of thoſe with whom we have no acquaintance or connection, and who

who are placed altogether out of the ſphere of our activity, can produce only anxiety to ourſelves, without any manner of advantage to them. To what purpoſe ſhould we trouble ourſelves about the world in the moon? All men, even thoſe at the greateſt diſtance, are no doubt intitled to our good wiſhes, and our good wiſhes we naturally give them. But if, notwithſtanding, they ſhould be unfortunate, to give ourſelves any anxiety upon that account, ſeems to be no part of our duty. That we ſhould be but little intereſted, therefore, in the fortune of thoſe whom we can neither ſerve nor hurt, and who are in every reſpect ſo very remote from us, ſeems wiſely ordered by nature; and if it were poſſible to alter in this reſpect the original conſtitution of our frame, we could yet gain nothing by the change.

Among the moraliſts, who endeavour to correct the natural inequality of our paſſive feelings by diminiſhing our ſenſibility to what peculiarly concerns ourſelves, we may count all the ancient ſects of philoſophers, but particularly the ancient ſtoics. Man, according to the ſtoics, ought to regard himſelf, not as ſomething ſeparated and detached, but as a citizen of the world, a member of the vaſt commonwealth of nature. To the intereſt of this great community, he ought at all times to be willing that his own little intereſts ſhould be ſacrificed. Whatever concerns himſelf, ought to affect him no more than whatever concerns any other equally important part of this

this immenſe ſyſtem. We ſhould view ourſelves, not in the light in which our own ſelfiſh paſſions are apt to place us, but in the light in which any other citizen of the world would view us. What befals ourſelves we ſhould regard as what befals our neighbour, or, what comes to the ſame thing, as our neighbour regards what befals us. "When "our neighbour," ſays Epictetus, "loſes his "wife or his ſon, there is no body who is "not ſenſible that this is a human cala-"mity, a natural event altogether according "to the ordinary courſe of things: but, when "the ſame thing happens to ourſelves, then "we cry out, as if we had ſuffered the moſt "dreadful misfortune. We ought, how-"ever, to remember how we were affected "when this accident happened to another, "and ſuch as we were in his caſe, ſuch "ought we to be in our own." How difficult ſoever it may be to attain this ſupreme degree of magnanimity and firmneſs, it is by no means either abſurd or uſeleſs to attempt it. Though few men have the ſtoical idea of what this perfect propriety requires, yet all men endeavour in ſome meaſure to command themſelves, and to bring down their ſelfiſh paſſions to ſomething which their neighbour can go along with. But this can never be done ſo effectually as by viewing whatever befals themſelves in the light in which their neighbours are apt to view it. The ſtoical philoſophy, in this reſpect, does little more than unfold our natural ideas of perfection.

perfection. There is nothing absurd or improper, therefore, in aiming at this perfect self-command. Neither would the attainment of it be useless, but, on the contrary, the most advantageous of all things, as establishing our happiness upon the most solid and secure foundation, a firm confidence in that wisdom and justice which governs the world, and an intire resignation of ourselves, and of whatever relates to ourselves to the all-wise disposal of this ruling principle in nature.

It scarce ever happens, however, that we are capable of adjusting our passive feelings to this perfect propriety. We indulge ourselves, and even the world indulges us, in some degree of irregularity in this respect. Though we should be too much affected by what concerns ourselves, and too little by what concerns other men, yet, if we always act with impartiality between ourselves and others, if we never actually sacrifice any great interest of others, to any little interest of our own, we are easily pardoned: and it were well, if upon all occasions, those who desire to do their duty were capable of maintaining this even degree of impartiality between themselves and others. But this is very far from being the case. Even in good men, the judge within is often in danger of being corrupted by the violence and injustice of their selfish passions, and is often induced to make a report very different from what the real circumstances of the case are capable of authorising.

There

There are two different occaſions, upon which we examine our own conduct, and endeavour to view it in the light in which the impartial ſpectator would view it. Firſt, when we are about to act; and, ſecondly, after we have acted. Our views are very partial in both caſes, but they are moſt ſo, when it is of moſt importance that they ſhould be otherwiſe.

When we are about to act, the eagerneſs of paſſion will ſeldom allow us to conſider what we are doing with the candour of an indifferent perſon. The violent emotions which at that time agitate us, diſcolour our views of things, even when we are endeavouring to place ourſelves in the ſituation of another, and to regard the objects that intereſt us, in the light in which they will naturally appear to him. The fury of our own paſſions conſtantly call us back to our own place, where every thing appears magnified and miſrepreſented by ſelf-love. Of the manner in which thoſe objects would appear to another, of the view which he would take of them, we can obtain, if I may ſay ſo, but inſtantaneous glimpſes, which vaniſh in a moment, and which even while they laſt are not altogether juſt. We cannot even for that moment diveſt ourſelves entirely of the heat and keenneſs with which our peculiar ſituation inſpires us, nor conſider what we are about to do with the compleat impartiality of an equitable judge. The paſſions, upon this account, as father Malebranch ſays, all juſtify themſelves

themſelves, and ſeem reaſonable, and proportioned to their objects, as long as we continue to feel them.

When the action is over, indeed, and the paſſions which prompted it have ſubſided, we can enter more coolly into ſentiments of the indifferent ſpectator. What before intereſted us, is now become almoſt as indifferent to us as it always was to him, and we can now examine our own conduct with his candour and impartiality. But our judgments now are of little importance, compared to what they were before; and when they are moſt ſeverely impartial, can commonly produce nothing but vain regret, and unavailing repentance, without ſecuring us from the like errors for the future. It is ſeldom, however, that they are quite candid even in this caſe. The opinion which we entertain of our own character, depends entirely on our judgment concerning our paſt conduct. It is ſo diſagreeable to think ill of ourſelves, that we often purpoſely turn away our view from thoſe circumſtances which might render that judgment unfavourable. He is a bold ſurgeon, they ſay, whoſe hand does not tremble when he performs an operation upon his own perſon; and he is often equally bold who does not heſitate to pull off the myſterious veil of ſelf-deluſion, which covers from his view the deformities of his own conduct. Rather than ſee our own behaviour under ſo diſagreeable an aſpect, we too often, fooliſhly and weakly, endeavour to exaſperate anew thoſe unjuſt paſſions which

which had formerly misled us; we endeavour by artifice to awaken our old hatreds, and irritate afresh our almost forgotten resentments: we even exert ourselves for this miserable purpose, and thus persevere in injustice, merely because we once were unjust, and because we are ashamed and afraid to see that we were so.

So partial are the views of mankind with regard to the propriety of their own conduct, both at the time of action and after it; and so difficult is it for them to view it in the light in which any indifferent spectator would consider it. But if it was by a peculiar faculty, such as the moral sense is supposed to be, that they judged of their own conduct, if they were endued with a particular power of perception, which distinguished the beauty or deformity of passions and affections; as their own passions would be more immediately exposed to the view of this faculty, it would judge with more accuracy concerning them, than concerning those of other men, of which it had only a more distant prospect.

This self-deceit, this fatal weakness of mankind, is the source of half the disorders of human life. If we saw ourselves in the light in which others see us, or in which they would see us if they knew all, a reformation would generally be unavoidable. We could not otherwise endure the sight.

Nature, however, has not left this weakness, which is of so much importance, altogether

together without a remedy; nor has ſhe abandoned us entirely to the deluſions of ſelf-love. Our continual obſervations upon the conduct of others, inſenſibly lead us to form to ourſelves certain general rules concerning what is fit and proper either to be done or to be avoided. Some of their actions ſhock all our natural ſentiments. We hear every body about us expreſs the like deteſtation againſt them. This ſtill further confirms, and even exaſperates our natural ſenſe of their deformity. It ſatisfies us that we view them in the proper light, when we ſee other people view them in the ſame light. We reſolve never to be guilty of the like, nor ever, upon any account, to render ourſelves in this manner the objects of univerſal diſapprobation. We thus naturally lay down to ourſelves a general rule, that all ſuch actions are to be avoided, as tending to render us odious, contemptible, or puniſhable, the objects of all thoſe ſentiments for which we have the greateſt dread and averſion. Other actions, on the contrary, call forth our approbation, and we hear every body around us expreſs the ſame favourable opinion concerning them. Every body is eager to honour and reward them. They excite all thoſe ſentiments for which we have by nature the ſtrongeſt deſire; the love, the gratitude, the admiration of mankind. We become ambitious of performing the like; and thus naturally lay down to ourſelves a rule of another kind, that every opportunity of acting

acting in this manner is carefully to be sought after.

It is thus that the general rules of morality are formed. They are ultimately founded upon experience of what, in particular instances, our moral faculties, our natural sense of merit and propriety, approve, or disapprove of. We do not originally approve or condemn particular actions; because upon examination, they appear to be agreeable or inconsistent with a certain general rule. The general rule, on the contrary, is formed by finding from experience, that all actions of a certain kind, or circumstanced in a certain manner, are approved of disapproved of. To the man who first saw an inhuman murder, committed from avarice, envy, or unjust resentment, and upon one too that loved and trusted the murderer, who beheld the last agonies of the dying person, who heard him, with his expiring breath, complain more of the perfidy and ingratitude of his false friend, than of the violence which had been done to him, there could be no occasion, in order to conceive how horrible such an action was, that he should reflect, that one of the most sacred rules of conduct was what prohibited the taking away the life of an innocent person, that this was a plain violation of that rule, and consequently a very blameable action. His detestation of this crime, it is evident, would arise instantaneously and antecedent to his having formed to himself any such general rule. The general rule, on the contrary, which he might

might afterwards form, would be founded upon the deteſtation which he felt neceſſarily ariſe in his own breaſt, at the thought of this, and every other particular action of the ſame kind.

When we read in hiſtory or romance, the account of actions either of generoſity or of baſeneſs, the admiration which we conceive for the one, and the contempt which we feel for the other, neither of them ariſe from reflecting that there are certain general rules which declare all actions of the one kind admirable, and all actions of the other contemptible. Thoſe general rules, on the contrary, are all formed from the experience we have had of the effects which actions of all different kinds naturally produce upon us.

An amiable action, a reſpectable action, an horrid action, are all of them actions which naturally excite the love, the reſpect, or the horror of the ſpectator, for the perſon who performs them. The general rules which determine what actions are, and what are not, the objects of each of thoſe ſentiments, can be formed no other way than by obſerving what actions actually and in fact excite them.

When theſe general rules, indeed, have been formed, when they are univerſally acknowledged and eſtabliſhed, by the concurring ſentiments of mankind, we frequently appeal to them as to the ſtandards of judgment, in debating concerning the degree of praiſe or blame that is due to certain actions of a complicated and dubious nature. They

are upon these occasions commonly cited as the ultimate foundations of what is just and unjust in human conduct; and this circumstance seems to have misled several very eminent authors, to draw up their systems in such a manner, as if they had supposed that the original judgments of mankind with regard to right and wrong, were formed like the decisions of a court of judicatory, by considering first the general rule, and then, secondly, whether the particular action under consideration fell properly within its comprehension.

Those general rules of conduct, when they have been fixed in our mind by habitual reflection, are of great use in correcting the misrepresentations of self-love concerning what is fit and proper to be done in our particular situation. The man of furious resentment, if he was to listen to the dictates of that passion, would perhaps regard the death of his enemy, as but a small compensation for the wrong, he imagines, he has received; which, however, may be no more than a very slight provocation. But his observations upon the conduct of others, have taught him how horrible all such sanguinary revenges appear. Unless his education has been very singular, he has laid it down to himself as an inviolable rule, to abstain from them upon all occasions. This rule preserves its authority with him, and renders him incapable of being guilty of such a violence. Yet the fury of his own temper may be such, that had this been

been the first time in which he considered such an action, he would undoubtedly have determined it to be quite just and proper, and what every impartial spectator would approve of. But that reverence for the rule which past experience has impressed upon him, checks the impetuosity of his passion, and helps him to correct the too partial views which self-love might otherwise suggest, of what was proper to be done in his situation. If he should allow himself to be so far transported by passion as to violate this rule, yet even in this case, he cannot throw off altogether the awe and respect with which he has been accustomed to regard it. At the very time of acting, at the moment in which passion mounts the highest, he hesitates and trembles at the thought of what he is about to do: he is secretly conscious to himself that he is breaking through those measures of conduct which, in all his cool hours, he had resolved never to infringe, which he had never seen infringed by others without the highest disapprobation, and of which the infringement, his own mind forbodes, must soon render him the object of the same disagreeable sentiments. Before he can take the last fatal resolution, he is tormented with all the agonies of doubt and uncertainty; he is terrified at the thought of violating so sacred a rule, and at the same time is urged and goaded on by the fury of his desires to violate it. He changes his purpose every moment; sometimes he resolves to adhere to his principle, and not indulge a pas-

ſion which may corrupt the remaining part of his life with the horrors of ſhame and repentance; and a momentary calm takes poſſeſſion of his breaſt, from the proſpect of that ſecurity and tranquillity which he will enjoy when he thus determines not to expoſe himſelf to the hazard of a contrary conduct. But immediately the paſſion rouſes anew, and with freſh fury drives him on to commit what he had the inſtant before reſolved to abſtain from. Wearied and diſtracted with thoſe continual irreſolutions, he at length, from a ſort of deſpair, makes the laſt fatal and irrecoverable ſtep; but with that terror and amazement with which one flying from an enemy, throws himſelf over a precipice, where he is ſure of meeting with more certain deſtruction than from any thing that purſues him from behind. Such are his ſentiments even at the time of acting; though he is then, no doubt, leſs ſenſible of the impropriety of his own conduct than afterwards, when his paſſion being gratified and palled, he begins to view what he has done in the light in which others are apt to view it; and actually feels, what he had only foreſeen very imperfectly before, the ſtings of remorſe and repentance begin to agitate and torment him.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the influence and authority of the general rules of morality, and that they are justly regarded as the laws of the Deity.

THE regard to those general rules of conduct, is what is properly called a sense of duty, a principle of the greatest consequence in human life, and the only principle by which the bulk of mankind are capable of directing their actions. Many men behave very decently, and through the whole of their lives avoid any considerable degree of blame, who yet, perhaps, never felt the sentiment upon the propriety of which we found our approbation of their conduct, but acted merely from a regard to what they saw were the established rules of behaviour. The man who has received great benefits from another person, may, by the natural coldness of his temper, feel but a very small degree of the sentiment of gratitude. If he has been virtuously educated, however, he will often have been made to observe how odious those actions appear which denote a want of this sentiment, and how amiable the contrary. Tho' his heart therefore is not warmed with any grateful affection, he will strive to act as if it was, and will endeavour to pay all those regards and attentions to his patron which the liveliest gratitude could suggest. He will visit

ſit him regularly; he will behave to him reſpectfully; he will never talk of him but with expreſſions of the higheſt eſteem, and of the many obligations which he owes to him. And what is more, he will carefully embrace every opportunity of making a proper return for paſt ſervices. He may do all this too without any hypocriſy or blameable diſſimulation, without any ſelfiſh intention of obtaining new favours, and without any deſign of impoſing either upon his benefactor or the public. The motive of his actions may be no other than a reverence for the eſtabliſhed rule of duty, a ſerious and earneſt deſire of acting, in every reſpect, according to the law of gratitude. A wife, in the ſame manner, may ſometimes not feel that tender regard for her huſband which is ſuitable to the relation that ſubſiſts between them. If ſhe has been virtuouſly educated, however, ſhe will endeavour to act as if ſhe felt it, to be careful, officious, faithful, and ſincere, and to be deficient in none of thoſe attentions which the ſentiment of conjugal affection could have prompted her to perform. Such a friend, and ſuch a wife, are neither of them, undoubtedly, the very beſt of their kinds; and though both of them may have the moſt ſerious and earneſt deſire to fulfil every part of their duty, yet they will fail in many nice and delicate regards, they will miſs many opportunities of obliging, which they could never have overlooked if they had poſſeſſed the ſentiment that is proper to their ſituation. Though not the very

firſt

first of their kinds, however, they are perhaps the second; and if the regard to the general rules of conduct has been very strongly impressed upon them, neither of them will fail in any very essential part of their duty. None but those of the happiest mold are capable of suiting with exact justness, their sentiments and behaviour to the smallest difference of situation, and of acting upon all occasions with the most delicate and accurate propriety. The coarse clay of which the bulk of mankind are formed, cannot be wrought up to such perfection. There is scarce any man, however, who by discipline, education, and example, may not be so impressed with a regard to general rules, as to act upon almost every occasion with tolerable decency, and through the whole of his life avoid any considerable degree of blame.

Without this sacred regard to general rules, there is no man whose conduct can be much depended upon. It is this which constitutes the most essential difference between a man of principle and honour and a worthless fellow. The one adheres, on all occasions, steadily and resolutely to his maxims, and preserves through the whole of his life one even tenor of conduct. The other, acts variously and accidentally, as humour, inclination, or interest chance to be uppermost. Nay, such are the inequalities of humour to which all men are subject, that without this principle, the man who, in all his cool hours, had the most delicate sensibility to the propriety of

conduct, might often be led to act absurdly upon the most frivolous occasions, and when it was scarce possible to assign any serious motive for his behaving in this manner. Your friend makes you a visit when you happen to be in a humour which makes it disagreeable to receive him: in your present mood his civility is very apt to appear an impertinent intrusion; and if you was to give way to the views of things which at this time occur, though civil in your temper, you would behave to him with coldness and contempt. What renders you incapable of such a rudeness, is nothing but a regard to the general rules of civility and hospitality, which prohibit it. That habitual reverence which your former experience has taught you for these, enables you to act, upon all such occasions, with nearly equal propriety, and hinders those inequalities of temper, to which all men are subject, from influencing your conduct in any very sensible degree. But if without regard to these general rules, even the duties of politeness, which are so easily observed, and which one can scarce have any serious motive to violate, would yet be so frequently violated, what would become of the duties of justice, of truth, of chastity, of fidelity, which it is often so difficult to observe, and which there may be so many strong motives to violate? But upon the tolerable observance of these duties, depends the very existence of human society, which would crumble into nothing if mankind were not generally impressed

preſſed with a reverence for thoſe important rules of conduct.

This reverence is ſtill further enhanced by an opinion which is firſt impreſſed by nature, and afterwards confirmed by reaſoning and philoſophy, that thoſe important rules of morality, are the commands and laws of the Deity, who will finally reward the obedient, and puniſh the tranſgreſſors of their duty.

This opinion or apprehenſion, I ſay, ſeems firſt to be impreſſed by nature. Men are naturally led to aſcribe to thoſe myſterious beings, whatever they are, which happen in any country, to be the objects of religious fear, all their own ſentiments and paſſions. They have no other, they can conceive no other to aſcribe to them. Thoſe unknown intelligences which they imagine but ſee not, muſt neceſſarily be formed with ſome ſort of reſemblance to thoſe intelligences of which they have experience. During the ignorance and darkneſs of pagan ſuperſtition, mankind ſeem to have formed the ideas of their divinities with ſo little delicacy, that they aſcribe to them, indiſcriminately, all the paſſions of human nature, thoſe not excepted which do the leaſt honour to our ſpecies, ſuch as luſt, hunger, avarice, envy, revenge. They could not fail, therefore, to aſcribe to thoſe beings, for the excellence of whoſe nature they ſtill conceived the higheſt admiration, thoſe ſentiments and qualities which are the great ornaments of humanity, and which ſeem to raiſe it to a reſemblance of divine perfection, the

the love of virtue and beneficence, and the abhorrence of vice and injuſtice. The man who was injured, called upon Jupiter to be witneſs of the wrong that was done to him, and could not doubt, but that divine being would behold it with the ſame indignation which would animate the meaneſt of mankind, who looked on when injuſtice was committed. The man who did the injury, felt himſelf to be the proper object of the deteſtation and reſentment of mankind; and his natural fears led him to impute the ſame ſentiments to thoſe awful beings, whoſe preſence he could not avoid, and whoſe power he could not reſiſt. Theſe natural hopes and fears, and ſuſpicions, were propagated by ſympathy, and confirmed by education; and the Gods were univerſally repreſented and believed to be the rewarders of humanity and mercy, and the avengers of perfidy and injuſtice. And thus religion, even in its rudeſt form, gave a ſanction to the rules of morality, long before the age of artificial reaſoning and philoſophy. That the terrors of religion ſhould thus enforce the natural ſenſe of duty, was of too much importance to the happineſs of mankind, for nature to leave it dependent upon the ſlowneſs and uncertainty of philoſophical reſearches.

Theſe reſearches, however, when they came to take place, confirmed thoſe original anticipations of nature. Upon whatever we ſuppoſe that our moral faculties are founded, whether upon a certain modification of reaſon,

upon an original instinct, called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted, that they were given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of this authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions, to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites, and to judge how far each of them was either to be indulged or restrained. Our moral faculties are by no means, as some have pretended, upon a level in this respect with the other faculties and appetites of our nature, endowed with no more right to restrain these last, than these last are to restrain them. No other faculty or principle of action judges of any other. Love does not judge of resentment, nor resentment of love. Those two passions may be opposite to one another, but cannot, with any propriety, be said to approve or disapprove of one another. But it is the peculiar office of those faculties now under our consideration to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature. They may be considered as a sort of senses of which those principles are the objects. Every sense is supreme over its own objects. There is no appeal from the eye with regard to the beauty of colours, nor from the ear with regard to the harmony of sounds, nor from the taste with regard to the agreeableness of flavours. Each of those senses judges in the last resort of its own objects. Whatever gratifies

gratifies the taſte is ſweet, whatever pleaſes the eye is beautiful, whatever ſooths the ear is harmonious. The very eſſence of each of thoſe qualities conſiſts in its being fitted to pleaſe the ſenſe to which it is addreſſed. It belongs to our moral faculties, in the ſame manner to determine when the ear ought to be ſoothed, when the eye ought to be indulged, when the taſte ought to be gratified, when and how far every other principle of our nature ought either to be indulged or reſtrained. What is agreeable to our moral faculties, is fit and right, and proper to be done; the contrary wrong, unfit and improper. The ſentiments which they approve of, are graceful and becoming: the contrary, ungraceful and unbecoming. The very words, right, wrong, fit, improper, graceful, unbecoming, mean only what pleaſes or diſpleaſes thoſe faculties.

Since theſe, therefore, were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the rules which they preſcribe, are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity, promulgated by thoſe vicegerents which he has thus ſet up within us. All general rules are commonly denominated laws: thus the general rules which bodies obſerve in the communication of motion, are called the laws of motion. But thoſe general rules which our moral faculties obſerve in approving or condemning whatever ſentiment or action is ſubjected to their examination, may much more juſtly be denominated ſuch. They

They have a much greater resemblance to what are properly called laws, those general rules which the sovereign lays down to direct the conduct of his subjects. Like them they are rules to direct the free actions of men; they are prescribed most surely by a lawful superior, and are attended too with the sanction of rewards and punishments. Those vicegerents of God within us, never fail to punish the violation of them, by the torments of inward shame, and self-condemnation; and on the contrary, always reward obedience with tranquility of mind, with contentment, and self-satisfaction.

There are innumerable other considerations which serve to confirm the same conclusion. The happiness of mankind, as well as of all other rational creatures, seems to have been the original purpose intended by the author of Nature, when he brought them into existence. No other end seems worthy of that supreme wisdom and divine benignity which we necessarily ascribe to him; and this opinion, which we are led to by the abstract consideration of his infinite perfections, is still more confirmed by the examination of the works of nature, which seem all intended to promote happiness, and to guard against misery. But by acting according to the dictates of our moral faculties, we necessarily pursue the most effectual means for promoting the happiness of mankind, and may therefore be said, in some sense, to co-operate with the Deity, and to advance as far as in our

our power the plan of Providence. By acting otherways, on the contrary, we seem to obstruct, in some measure, the scheme which the Author of Nature has established for the happiness and perfection of the world, and to declare ourselves, if I may say so, in some measure the enemies of God. Hence we are naturally encouraged to hope for his extraordinary favour and reward in the one case, and to dread his vengeance and punishment in the other.

There are besides many other reasons, and many other natural principles, which all tend to confirm and inculcate the same salutary doctrine. If we consider the general rules by which external prosperity and adversity are commonly distributed in this life, we shall find, that notwithstanding the disorder in which all things appear to be in this world, yet even here every virtue naturally meets with its proper reward, with the recompense which is most fit to encourage and promote it; and this too so surely, that it requires a very extraordinary concurrence of circumstances entirely to disappoint it. What is the reward most proper for encouraging industry, prudence, and circumspection? Success in every sort of business. And is it possible that in the whole of life these virtues should fail of attaining it? Wealth and external honours are their proper recompence, and the recompence which they can seldom fail of acquiring. What reward is most proper for promoting the practice of truth, justice, and humanity?

manity? The confidence, the esteem, and love of those we live with. Humanity does not desire to be great, but to be beloved. It is not in being rich that truth and justice would rejoice, but in being trusted and believed, recompences which those virtues must almost always acquire. By some very extraordinary and unlucky circumstance, a good man may come to be suspected of a crime of which he was altogether incapable, and upon that account be most unjustly exposed for the remaining part of his life to the horror and aversion of mankind. By an accident of this kind he may be said to lose his all, notwithstanding his integrity and justice; in the same manner as a cautious man, notwithstanding his utmost circumspection, may be ruined by an earthquake or an inundation. Accidents of the first kind, however, are perhaps still more rare, and still more contrary to the common course of things than those of the second; and it still remains true, that the practice of truth, justice, and humanity, is a certain and almost infallible method of acquiring what those virtues chiefly aim at, the confidence and love of those we live with. A person may be very easily misrepresented with regard to a particular action; but it is scarce possible that he should be so with regard to the general tenor of his conduct. An innocent man may be believed to have done wrong: this, however, will rarely happen. On the contrary, the established opinion of the innocence of his manners,

manners, will often lead us to abſolve him where he has really been in the fault, notwithſtanding very ſtrong preſumptions. A knave, in the ſame manner may eſcape cenſure, or even meet with applauſe, for a particular knavery, in which his conduct is not underſtood. But no man was ever habitually ſuch, without being almoſt univerſally known to be ſo, and without being even frequently ſuſpected of guilt, when he was in reality perfectly innocent. And ſo far as vice and virtue can be either puniſhed or rewarded by the ſentiments and opinions of mankind, they both, according to the common courſe of things, meet even here with ſomething more than exact and impartial juſtice.

But though the general rules by which proſperity and adverſity are commonly diſtributed, when conſidered in this cool and philoſophical light, appear to be perfectly ſuited to the ſituation of mankind in this life, yet they are by no means ſuited to ſome of our natural ſentiments. Our natural love and admiration for ſome virtues is ſuch, that we ſhould wiſh to beſtow on them all ſorts of honours and rewards, even thoſe which we muſt acknowledge to be the proper recompences of other qualities with which thoſe virtues are not always accompanied. Our deteſtation, on the contrary, for ſome vices is ſuch, that we ſhould deſire to heap upon them every ſort of diſgrace and diſaſter, thoſe not excepted which are the natural conſequences of very different

different qualities. Magnanimity, generosity, and justice command so high a degree of admiration, that we desire to see them crowned with wealth, and power, and honours of every kind, the natural consequences of prudence, industry, and application; qualities with which those virtues are not inseparably connected. Fraud, falsehood, brutality, and violence, on the other hand, excite in every human breast such scorn and abhorrence, that our indignation rouzes to see them possess those advantages which they may in some sense be said to have merited, by the diligence and industry with which they are sometimes attended. The industrious knave cultivates the soil; the indolent good man leaves it uncultivated. Who ought to reap the harvest? Who starve, and who live in plenty? The natural course of things decides it in favour of the knave: the natural sentiments of mankind in favour of the man of virtue. Man judges, that the good qualities of the one are greatly over-recompensed by those advantages which they tend to procure him, and that the omissions of the other are by far too severely punished by the distress which they naturally bring upon him; and human laws, the consequences of human sentiments, forfeit the life and the estate of the industrious and cautious traitour, and reward, by extraordinary recompenses, the fidelity and public spirit of the improvident and careless good citizen. Thus man is by nature directed to correct, in some measure, that distribution of things which she herself would

otherwiſe have made. The rules which for this purpoſe ſhe prompts him to follow, are different from thoſe which ſhe herſelf obſerves. She beſtows upon every virtue, and upon every vice, that preciſe reward or puniſhment which is beſt fitted to encourage the one, or to reſtrain the other. She is directed by this ſole conſideration, and pays little regard to the different degrees of merit and demerit, which they may ſeem to poſſeſs in the ſentiments and paſſions of man. Man, on the contrary, pays regard to this only, and would endeavour to render the ſtate of every virtue preciſely proportioned to that degree of love and eſteem, and of every vice to that degree of contempt and abhorrence which he himſelf conceives for it. The rules which ſhe follows are fit for her, thoſe which he follows for him: but both are calculated to promote the ſame great end, the order of the world, and the perfection and happineſs of human nature.

But though man is thus employed to alter that diſtribution of things which natural events would make, if left to themſelves; though, like the Gods of the poets, he is perpetually interpoſing, by extraordinary means, in favour of virtue, and in oppoſition to vice, and like them, endeavours to turn away the arrow that is aimed at the head of the righteous, but accelerates the ſword of deſtruction that is lifted up againſt the wicked; yet he is by no means able to render the fortune of either quite ſuitable to his own ſentiments and wiſhes. The natural courſe of things cannot be entirely

tirely controuled by the impotent endeavours of man: the current is too rapid and too ſtrong for him to ſtop it; and though the rules which direct it appear to have been eſtabliſhed for the wiſeſt and beſt purpoſes, they ſometimes produce effects which ſhock all his natural ſentiments. That a great combination of men, ſhould prevail over a ſmall one; that thoſe who engage in an enterprize with forethought and all neceſſary preparation, ſhould prevail over ſuch as oppoſe them without any; and that every end ſhould be acquired by thoſe means only which nature has eſtabliſhed for acquiring it, ſeems to be a rule not only neceſſary and unavoidable in itſelf, but even uſeful and proper for rouzing the induſtry and attention of mankind. Yet, when in conſequence of this rule, violence and artifice prevail over ſincerity and juſtice, what indignation does it not excite in the breaſt of every human ſpectator? What ſorrow and compaſſion for the ſufferings of the innocent, and what furious reſentment againſt the ſucceſs of the oppreſſor? We are equally grieved and enraged, at the wrong that is done, but often find it altogether out of our power to redreſs it. When we thus deſpair of finding any force upon earth which can check the triumph of injuſtice, we naturally appeal to heaven, and hope, that the great author of our nature will himſelf execute hereafter, what all the principles which he has given us for the direction of our conduct, prompt us to attempt even here; that he will compleat the plan which

he himſelf has thus taught us to begin; and will, in a life to come, render to every one according to the works which he has performed in this world. And thus we are led to the belief of a future ſtate, not only by the weakneſſes, by the hopes and fears of human nature, but by the nobleſt and beſt principles which belong to it, by the love of virtue, and by the abhorrence of vice and injuſtice.

"Does it ſuit the greatneſs of God," ſays the eloquent and philoſophical biſhop of Clermont, with that paſſionate and exaggerating force of imagination, which ſeems ſometimes to exceed the bounds of decorum; "does it ſuit the greatneſs of God, to leave "the world which he has created in ſo uni-"verſal a diſorder? To ſee the wicked pre-"vail almoſt always over the juſt; the inno-"cent dethroned by the uſurper; the father "become the victim of the ambition of an "unnatural ſon; the huſband expiring under "the ſtroke of a barbarous and faithleſs wife? "From the height of his greatneſs ought "God to behold thoſe melancholy events as "a fantaſtical amuſement, without taking "any ſhare in them? Becauſe he is great, "ſhould he be weak, or unjuſt, or barba-"rous? Becauſe men are little, ought they "to be allowed either to be diſſolute without "puniſhment, or virtuous without reward? "O God! if this is the character of your Su-"preme Being; if it is you whom we adore "under ſuch dreadful ideas; I can no longer "acknowledge you for my father, for my "protector,

" protector, for the comforter of my sorrow,
" the support of my weakness, the rewarder
" of my fidelity. You would then be no
" more than an indolent and fantastical ty-
" rant, who sacrifices mankind to his inso-
" lent vanity, and who has brought them out
" of nothing, only to make them serve for the
" sport of his leisure, and of his caprice."

When the general rules which determine the merit and demerit of actions, come thus to be regarded, as the laws of an All-powerful Being, who watches over our conduct, and who, in a life to come, will reward the observance, and punish the breach of them; they necessarily acquire a new sacredness from this consideration. That our regard to the will of the Deity, ought to be the supreme rule of our conduct, can be doubted of by no body who believes his existence, The very thought of disobedience appears to involve in it the most shocking impropriety. How vain, how absurd would it be for man, either to oppose or to neglect the commands that were laid upon him by Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Power! How unnatural, how impiously ungrateful not to reverence the precepts that were prescribed to him by the infinite goodness of his Creator, even though no punishment was to follow their violation. The sense of propriety too is here well supported by the strongest motives of self-interest. The idea that, however we may escape the observation of man, or be placed above the reach of human punishment, yet we are always

acting under the eye, and exposed to the punishment of God, the great avenger of injustice, is a motive capable of restraining the most headstrong passions, with those at least who, by constant reflection, have rendered it familiar to them.

It is in this manner that religion enforces the natural sense of duty: and hence it is, that mankind are generally disposed to place great confidence in the probity of those who seem deeply impressed with religious sentiments. Such persons, they imagine, act under an additional tye, besides those which regulate the conduct of other men. The regard to the propriety of action as well as to reputation, the regard to the applause of his own breast, as well as to that of others, are motives which they suppose have the same influence over the religious man, as over the man of the world. But the former lies under another restraint, and never acts deliberately but as in the presence of that Great Superior who is finally to recompense him according to his deeds. A greater trust is reposed, upon this account, in the regularity and exactness of his conduct. And wherever the natural principles of religion are not corrupted by the factious and party zeal of some worthless cabal; wherever the first duty which it requires, is to fulfil all the obligations of morality; wherever men are not taught to regard frivolous observances, as more immediate duties of religion, than acts of justice and beneficence; and to imagine, that by sacrifices and ceremonies, and vain supplications,

ſupplications, they can bargain with the Deity for fraud, and perfidy, and violence, the world undoubtedly judges right in this reſpect, and juſtly places a double confidence in the rectitude of the religious man's behaviour.

CHAP. IV.

In what caſes the ſenſe of duty ought to be the ſole principle of our conduct; and in what caſes it ought to concur with other motives.

RELIGION affords ſuch ſtrong motives to the practice of virtue, and guards us by ſuch powerful reſtraints from the temptations of vice, that many have been led to ſuppoſe, that religious principles were the ſole laudable motives of action. We ought neither, they ſaid, to reward from gratitude, nor puniſh from reſentment; we ought neither to protect the helpleſſneſs of our children, nor afford ſupport to the infirmities of our parents, from natural affection. All affections for particular objects, ought to be extinguiſhed in our breaſt, and one great affection take the place of all others, the love of the Deity, the deſire of rendering ourſelves agreeable to him, and of directing our conduct in every reſpect according to his will. We ought not to be grateful from gratitude, we ought not to be charitable from humanity, we ought not to be public-ſpirited from the love of our country, nor generous and juſt from

the love of mankind. The ſole principle and motive of our conduct in the performance of all thoſe different duties, ought to be a ſenſe that God has commanded us to perform them. I ſhall not at preſent take time to examine this opinion particularly; I ſhall only obſerve, that we ſhould not have expected to have found it entertained by any ſect, who profeſſed themſelves of a religion in which, as it is the firſt precept to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength, ſo it is the ſecond to love our neighbour as we love ourſelves; and we love ourſelves ſurely for our own ſakes, and not merely becauſe we are commanded to do ſo. That the ſenſe of duty ſhould be the ſole principle of our conduct, is no where the precept of Chriſtianity; but that it ſhould be the ruling and the governing one, as philoſophy, and as, indeed, common ſenſe directs. It may be a queſtion, however, in what caſes our actions ought to ariſe chiefly or entirely from a ſenſe of duty, or from a regard to general rules; and in what caſes ſome other ſentiment or affection ought to concur, and have a principal influence.

The deciſion of this queſtion, which cannot, perhaps, be given with any very great accuracy, will depend upon two different circumſtances; firſt, upon the natural agreeableneſs or deformity of the ſentiment or affection which would prompt us to any action independent of all regard to general rules; and ſecondly, upon the preciſion and exactneſs, or the

the looſeneſs and inaccuracy of the general rules themſelves.

I. Firſt, I ſay, it will depend upon the natural agreeableneſs or deformity of the affection itſelf, how far our actions ought to ariſe from it, or entirely proceed from a regard to the general rule.

All thoſe graceful and admired actions, to which the benevolent affections would prompt us, ought to proceed as much from the paſſions themſelves, as from any regard to the general rules of conduct. A benefactor thinks himſelf but ill requited, if the perſon upon whom he has beſtowed his good offices, repays them merely from a cold ſenſe of duty, and without any affection to his perſon. A huſband is diſſatisfied with the moſt obedient wife, when he imagines her conduct is animated by no other principle beſides her regard to what the relation ſhe ſtands in requires. Though a ſon ſhould fail in none of the offices of filial duty, yet if he wants that affectionate reverence which it ſo well becomes him to feel, the parent may juſtly complain of his indifference. Nor could a ſon be quite ſatisfied with a parent who, though he performed all the duties of his ſituation, had nothing of that fatherly fondneſs which might have been expected from him. With regard to all ſuch benevolent and ſocial affections, it is agreeable to ſee the ſenſe of duty employed rather to reſtrain than to enliven them, rather to hinder us from doing too much, than to prompt us to do what we ought. It gives us

us pleaſure to ſee a father obliged to check his own fondneſs, a friend obliged to ſet bounds to his natural generoſity, a perſon who has received a benefit, obliged to reſtrain the too ſanguine gratitude of his own temper.

The contrary maxim takes place with regard to the malevolent and unſocial paſſions. We ought to reward from the gratitude and generoſity of our own hearts, without any reluctance, and without being obliged to reflect how great the propriety of rewarding: but we ought always to puniſh with reluctance, and more from a ſenſe of the propriety of puniſhing, than from any ſavage diſpoſition to revenge. Nothing is more graceful than the behaviour of the man who appears to reſent the greateſt injuries, more from a ſenſe that they deſerve, and are the proper objects of reſentment, than from feeling himſelf the furies of that diſagreeable paſſion; who, like a judge, conſiders only the general rule, which determines what vengeance is due for each particular offence; who, in executing that rule, feels leſs for what himſelf has ſuffered, than what the offender is about to ſuffer; who, though in wrath remembers mercy, and is diſpoſed to interpret the rule in the moſt gentle and favourable manner, and to allow all the alleviations which the moſt candid humanity could, conſiſtently with good ſenſe, admit of.

As the ſelfiſh paſſions, according to what has formerly been obſerved, hold in other reſpects a ſort of middle place, between the ſocial

ſocial and unſocial affections, ſo do they likewiſe in this. The purſuit of the objects of private intereſt, in all common, little and ordinary caſes, ought to flow rather from a regard to the general rules which preſcribe ſuch conduct, than from any paſſion for the objects themſelves; but upon more important and extraordinary occaſions, we ſhould be aukward, inſipid, and ungraceful, if the objects themſelves did not appear to animate us with a conſiderable degree of paſſion. To be anxious, or to be laying a plot either to gain or to ſave a ſingle ſhilling, would degrade the moſt vulgar tradeſman in the opinion of all his neighbours. Let his circumſtances be ever ſo mean, no attention to any ſuch ſmall matters, for the ſake of the things themſelves, muſt appear in his conduct. His ſituation may require the moſt ſevere œconomy, and the moſt exact aſſiduity: but each particular exertion of that œconomy and aſſiduity muſt proceed not ſo much from a regard for that particular ſaving or gain, as for the general rule which to him preſcribes, with the utmoſt rigour, ſuch a tenor of conduct. His parſimony to-day muſt not ariſe from a deſire of the particular three-pence which he will ſave by it, nor his attendance in his ſhop from a paſſion for the particular ten-pence which he will acquire by it: both the one and the other ought to proceed ſolely from a regard to the general rule, which preſcribes, with the moſt unrelenting ſeverity, this plan of conduct to all perſons in his way of life. In this

conſiſts

consists the difference between the character of a miser and that of a person of exact œconomy and assiduity. The one is anxious about small matters for their own sake: the other attends to them only in consequence of the scheme of life which he has laid down to himself.

It is quite otherwise with regard to the more extraordinary and important objects of self-interest. A person appears mean-spirited, who does not pursue these with some degree of earnestness for their own sake. We should despise a prince who was not anxious about conquering or defending a province. We should have little respect for a private gentleman who did not exert himself to gain an estate, or even a considerable office, when he could acquire them without either meanness or injustice. A member of parliament who shews no keenness about his own election, is abandoned by his friends, as altogether unworthy of their attachment. Even a tradesman is thought a poor-spirited fellow among his neighbours, who does not bestir himself to get what they call an extraordinary job, or some uncommon advantage. This spirit and keenness constitutes the difference between the man of enterprize and the man of dull regularity. Those great objects of self-interest, of which the loss of acquisition quite changes the rank of the person, are the objects of the passion properly called ambition; a passion, which when it keeps within the bounds of prudence and justice, is always admired

admired in the world, and has even ſometimes a certain irregular greatneſs, which dazzles the imagination, when it paſſes the limits of both theſe virtues, and is not only unjuſt but extravagant. Hence the general admiration for Heroes and Conquerors, and even for Stateſmen, whoſe projects have been very daring and extenſive, though altogether devoid of juſtice; ſuch as thoſe of the Cardinals of Richlieu and of Retz. The objects of avarice and ambition differ only in their greatneſs. A miſer is as furious about a halfpenny, as a man of ambition about the conqueſt of a kingdom.

II. Secondly, I ſay, it will depend partly upon the preciſion and exactneſs, or the looſeneſs and inaccuracy of the general rules themſelves, how far our conduct ought to proceed entirely from a regard to them.

The general rules of almoſt all the virtues, the general rules which determine what are the offices of prudence, of charity, of generoſity, of gratitude, of friendſhip, are in many reſpects looſe and inaccurate, admit of many exceptions, and require ſo many modifications, that it is ſcarce poſſible to regulate our conduct entirely by a regard to them. The common proverbial maxims of prudence, being founded in univerſal experience, are perhaps the beſt general rules which can be given about it. To affect, however, a very ſtrict and literal adherence to them would evidently be the moſt abſurd and ridiculous pedantry. Of all the virtues I have juſt now mentioned, gratitude

gratitude is that, perhaps, of which the rules are the moſt preciſe, and admit of the feweſt exceptions. That as ſoon as we can we ſhould make a return of equal, and if poſſible of ſuperior value to the ſervices we have received, would ſeem to be a pretty plain rule, and one which admitted of ſcarce any exceptions. Upon the moſt ſuperficial examination, however, this rule will appear to be in the higheſt degree looſe and inaccurate, and to admit of ten thouſand exceptions. If your benefactor attended you in your ſickneſs, ought you to attend him in his? or can you fulfil the obligation of gratitude, by making a return of a different kind? If you ought to attend him, how long ought you to attend him? The ſame time which he attended you, or longer, and how much longer? If your friend lent you money in your diſtreſs, ought you to lend him money in his? How much ought you to lend him? When ought you to lend him? Now, or to-morrow, or next month? And for how long a time? It is evident, that no general rule can be laid down, by which a preciſe anſwer can, in all caſes, be given to any of theſe queſtions. The difference between his character and yours, between his circumſtances and yours, may be ſuch, that you may be perfectly grateful, and juſtly refuſe to lend him a halfpenny: and, on the contrary, you may be willing to lend, or even to give him ten times the ſum which he lent you, and yet juſtly be accuſed of the blackeſt

blackeſt ingratitude, and of not having fulfilled the hundredth part of the obligation you lie under. As the duties of gratitude, however, are perhaps the moſt ſacred of all thoſe which the beneficent virtues preſcribe to us, ſo the general rules which determine them are, as I ſaid before, the moſt accurate. Thoſe which aſcertain the actions required by friendſhip, humanity, hoſpitality, generoſity, are ſtill more vague and indeterminate.

There is, however, one virtue of which the general rules determine with the greateſt exactneſs every external action which it requires. This virtue is juſtice. The rules of juſtice are accurate in the higheſt degree, and admit of no exceptions or modifications, but ſuch as may be aſcertained as accurately as the rules themſelves, and which generally, indeed, flow from the very ſame principles with them. If I owe a man ten pounds, juſtice requires that I ſhould preciſely pay him ten pounds, either at the time agreed upon, or when he demands it. What I ought to perform, how much I ought to perform, when and where I ought to perform it, the whole nature and circumſtances of the action preſcribed, are all of them preciſely fixt and determined. Though it may be aukward and pedantic, therefore, to affect too ſtrict an adherence to the common rules of prudence or generoſity, there is no pedantry in ſticking faſt by the rules of juſtice. On the contrary, the moſt ſacred regard is due to them; and the actions which this virtue requires are never

ver ſo properly performed, as when the chief motive for performing them is a reverential and religious regard to thoſe general rules which require them. In the practice of the other virtues, our conduct ſhould rather be directed by a certain idea of propriety, by a certain taſte for a particular tenor of conduct, than by any regard to a preciſe maxim or rule; and we ſhould conſider the end and foundation of the rule, more than the rule itſelf. But it is otherwiſe with regard to juſtice: the man who in that refines the leaſt, and adheres with the moſt obſtinate ſtedfaſtneſs, to the general rules themſelves, is the moſt commendable, and the moſt to be depended upon. Though the end of the rules of juſtice be, to hinder us from hurting our neighbour, it may frequently be a crime to violate them, though we could pretend, with ſome pretext of reaſon, that this particular violation could do no hurt. A man often becomes a villain the moment he begins, even in his own heart, to chicane in this manner. The moment he thinks of departing from the moſt ſtaunch and poſitive adherence to what thoſe inviolable precepts preſcribe to him, he is no longer to be truſted, and no man can ſay what degree of guilt he may not arrive at. The thief imagines he does no evil, when he ſteals from the rich, what he ſuppoſes they may eaſily want, and what poſſibly they may never even know has been ſtolen from them. The adulterer imagines he does no evil, when he corrupts the wife of his friend, provided he

he covers his intrigue from the ſuſpicion of the huſband, and does not diſturb the peace of the family. When once we begin to give way to ſuch refinements, there is no enormity ſo groſs of which we may not be capable.

The rules of juſtice may be compared to the rules of grammar; the rules of the other virtues, to the rules which criticks lay down for the attainment of what is ſublime and elegant in compoſition. The one, are preciſe, accurate, and indeſpenſible. The other, are looſe, vague, and indeterminate, and preſent us rather with a general idea of the perfection we ought to aim at, than afford us any certain and infallible directions for acquiring it. A man may learn to write grammatically by rule, with the moſt abſolute infallibility; and ſo, perhaps, he may be taught to act juſtly. But there are no rules whoſe obſervance will infallibly lead us to the attainment of elegance or ſublimity in writing, though there are ſome which may help us, in ſome meaſure, to correct and aſcertain the vague ideas which we might otherwiſe have entertained of thoſe perfections: and there are no rules by the knowledge of which we can infallibly be taught to act upon all occaſions with prudence, with juſt magnanimity, or proper beneficence. Though there are ſome which may enable us to correct and aſcertain, in ſeveral reſpects, the imperfect ideas which we might otherwiſe have entertained of thoſe virtues.

It may ſometimes happen, that with the moſt ſerious and earneſt deſire of acting ſo as to deſerve approbation, we may miſtake the proper rules of conduct, and thus be miſled by that very principle which ought to direct us. It is in vain to expect, that in this caſe mankind ſhould entirely approve of our behaviour. They cannot enter into that abſurd idea of duty which influenced us, nor go along with any of the actions which follow from it. There is ſtill, however, ſomething reſpectable in the character and behaviour of one who is thus betrayed into vice, by a wrong ſenſe of duty, or by what is called an erroneous conſcience. How fatally ſoever he may be miſled by it, he is ſtill, with the generous and humane, more the object of commiſeration than of hatred or reſentment. They lament the weakneſs of human nature, which expoſes us to ſuch unhappy deluſions, even while we are moſt ſincerely labouring after perfection, and endeavouring to act according to the beſt principle which can poſſibly direct us. Falſe notions of religion are almoſt the only cauſes which can occaſion any very groſs perverſion of our natural ſentiments in this way; and that principle which gives the greateſt authority to the rules of duty, is alone capable of diſtorting our ideas of them in any conſiderable degree. In all other caſes common ſenſe is ſufficient to direct us, if not to the moſt exquiſite propriety of conduct, yet to ſomething which is not very far from it; and provided we are in earneſt deſirous to do well,

well, our behaviour will always, upon the whole, be praiſe-worthy. That to obey the will of the Deity, is the firſt rule of duty, all men are agreed. But concerning the particular commandments which that will may impoſe upon us, they differ widely from one another. In this, therefore, the greateſt mutual forbearance and toleration is due; and though the defence of ſociety requires that crimes ſhould be puniſhed, from whatever motives they proceed, yet a good man will always puniſh them with reluctance, when they evidently proceed from falſe notions of religious duty. He will never feel againſt thoſe who commit them that indignation which he feels againſt other criminals, but will rather regret, and ſometimes even admire their unfortunate firmneſs and magnanimity, at the very time that he puniſhes their crime. In the tragedy of Mahomet, one of the fineſt of Mr. Voltaire's, it is well repreſented, what ought to be our ſentiments for crimes which proceed from ſuch motives. In that tragedy, two young people of different ſexes, of the moſt innocent and virtuous diſpoſitions, and without any other weakneſs except what endears them the more to us, a mutual fondneſs for one another, are inſtigated by the ſtrongeſt motives of a falſe religion, to commit a horrid murder, that ſhocks all the principles of human nature: a venerable old man, who had expreſſed the moſt tender affection for them both, for whom, notwithſtanding he was the avowed enemy of

their religion, they had both conceived the highest reverence and esteem, and who was in reality their father, though they did not know him to be such, is pointed out to them as a sacrifice which God had expressly required at their hands, and they are commanded to kill him. While they are about executing this crime, they are tortured with all the agonies which can arise from the struggle between the idea of the indispensibleness of religious duty on the one side, and compassion, gratitude, reverence for the age, and love for the humanity and virtue of the person whom they are going to destroy, on the other. The representation of this exhibits one of the most interesting, and perhaps the most instructive spectacle that was ever introduced upon any theatre. The sense of duty, however, at last prevails over all the amiable weaknesses of human nature. They execute the crime imposed upon them; but immediately discover their error, and the fraud which had deceived them, and are distracted with horror, remorse, and resentment. Such as are our sentiments for the unhappy Seid and Palmira, such ought we to feel for every person who is in this manner misled by religion, when we are sure that it is really religion which misleads him, and not the pretence of it, which is made a cover to some of the worst of human passions.

As a person may act wrong by following a wrong sense of duty, so nature may sometimes prevail, and lead him to act right in opposition

opposition to it. We cannot in this case be displeased to see that motive prevail, which we think ought to prevail, though the person himself is so weak as to think otherwise. As his conduct, however, is the effect of weakness, not principle, we are far from bestowing upon it any thing that approaches to compleat approbation. A bigotted Roman Catholic, who, during the massacre of St. Bartholomew, had been so overcome by compassion, as to save some unhappy protestants, whom he thought it his duty to destroy, would not seem to be entitled to that high applause which we should have bestowed upon him, had he exerted the same generosity with compleat self-approbation. We might be pleased with the humanity of his temper, but we should still regard him with a sort of pity which is altogether inconsistent with the admiration that is due to perfect virtue. It is the same case with all the other passions. We do not dislike to see them exert themselves properly, even when a false notion of duty would direct the person to restrain them. A very devout Quaker, who upon being struck upon one cheek, instead of turning up the other, should so far forget his literal interpretation of our Saviour's precept, as to bestow some good discipline upon the brute that insulted him, would not be disagreeable to us. We should laugh and be diverted with his spirit, and rather like him the better for it. But we should by no means regard him with that respect and esteem which would seem due to

one who, upon a like occaſion, had acted properly, from a juſt ſenſe of what was proper to be done. No action can properly be called virtuous, which is not accompanied with the ſentiment of ſelf-approbation.

PART

PART IV.

Of the EFFECT of UTILITY upon the ſentiment of approbation.

Conſiſting of one SECTION.

CHAP. I.

Of the beauty which the appearance of UTILITY *beſtows upon all the productions of art, and of the extenſive influence of this ſpecies of beauty.*

THAT utility is one of the principal ſources of beauty has been obſerved by every body, who has conſidered with any attention what conſtitutes the nature of beauty. The conveniency of a houſe gives pleaſure to the ſpectator as well as its regularity, and he is as much hurt when he obſerves the contrary defect, as when he ſees the correſpondent windows of different forms, or the door not placed exactly in the middle of the building. That the fitneſs of any ſyſtem or machine to produce the end for which it was intended, beſtows a certain propriety and beauty upon the whole, and renders the very

thought and contemplation of it agreeable, is ſo very obvious that nobody has overlooked it.

The cauſe too, why utility pleaſes, has of late been aſſigned by an ingenious and agreeable philoſopher, who joins the greateſt depth of thought to the greateſt elegance of expreſſion, and poſſeſſes the ſingular and happy talent of treating the abſtruſeſt ſubjects not only with the moſt perfect perſpicuity, but with the moſt lively eloquence. The utility of any object, according to him, pleaſes the maſter by perpetually ſuggeſting to him the pleaſure or conveniency which it is fitted to promote. Every time he looks at it, he is put in mind of this pleaſure; and the object in this manner becomes a ſource of perpetual ſatisfaction and enjoyment. The ſpectator enters by ſympathy into the ſentiments of the maſter, and neceſſarily views the object under the ſame agreeable aſpect. When we viſit the palaces of the great, we cannot help conceiving the ſatisfaction we ſhould enjoy if we ourſelves were the maſters, and were poſſeſſed of ſo much artful and ingeniouſly contrived accommodation. A ſimilar account is given why the appearance of inconveniency ſhould render any object diſagreeable both to the owner and to the ſpectator.

But that this fitneſs, this happy contrivance of any production of art, ſhould often be more valued, than the very end for which it was intended; and that the exact adjuſtment of the means for attaining any conveniency

niency or pleasure, should frequently be more regarded, than that very conveniency or pleasure, in the attainment of which their whole merit would seem to consist, has not, so far as I know, been yet taken notice of by any body. That this however is very frequently the case, may be observed in a thousand instances, both in the most frivolous and in the most important concerns of human life.

When a person comes into his chamber, and finds the chairs all standing in the middle of the room, he is angry with his servant, and rather than see them continue in that disorder, perhaps takes the trouble himself to set them all in their places with their backs to the wall. The whole propriety of this new situation arises from its superior conveniency in leaving the floor free and disengaged. To attain this conveniency he voluntarily puts himself to more trouble than all he could have suffered from the want of it; since nothing was more easy, than to have set himself down upon one of them, which is probably what he does when his labour is over. What he wanted therefore, it seems, was not so much this conveniency, as that arrangement of things which promotes it. Yet it is this conveniency which ultimately recommends that arrangement, and bestows upon it the whole of its propriety and beauty.

A watch, in the same manner, that falls behind above two minutes in a day, is despised by one curious in watches. He sells it perhaps for a couple of guineas, and purchases

chaſes another at fifty, which will not loſe above a minute in a fortnight. The ſole uſe of watches however, is to tell us what o'clock it is, and to hinder us from breaking any engagement, or ſuffering any other inconveniency by our ignorance in that particular point. But the perſon ſo nice with regard to this machine, will not always be found either more ſcrupulouſly punctual than other men, or more anxiouſly concerned upon any other account, to know preciſely what time of day it is. What intereſts him is not ſo much the attainment of this piece of knowledge, as the perfection of the machine which ſerves to attain it.

How many people ruin themſelves by laying out money on trinkets of frivolous utility? What pleaſes theſe lovers of toys is not ſo much the utility, as the aptneſs of the machines which are fitted to promote it. All their pockets are ſtuffed with little conveniencies. They contrive new pockets, unknown in the cloaths of other people, in order to carry a greater number. They walk about loaded with a multitude of baubles, in weight and ſometimes in value not inferior to an ordinary Jews-box, ſome of which may ſometimes be of ſome little uſe, but all of which might at all times be very well ſpared, and of which the whole utility is certainly not worth the fatigue of bearing the burden.

Nor is it only with regard to ſuch frivolous objects that our conduct is influenced by this principle; it is often the ſecret motive of the

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moſt ſerious and important purſuits of both private and public life.

The poor man's ſon, whom heaven in its anger has viſited with ambition, when he begins to look around him admires the condition of the rich. He finds the cottage of his father too ſmall for his accommodation, and fancies he ſhould be lodged more at his eaſe in a palace. He is diſpleaſed with being obliged to walk a-foot, or to endure the fatigue of riding on horſeback. He ſees his ſuperiors carried about in machines, and imagines that in one of theſe he could travel with leſs inconveniency. He feels himſelf naturally indolent, and willing to ſerve himſelf with his own hands as little as poſſible; and judges, that a numerous retinue of ſervants would ſave him from a great deal of trouble. He thinks if he had attained all theſe, he could ſit ſtill contentedly, and be quiet, enjoying himſelf in the thought of the happineſs and tranquillity of his ſituation. He is enchanted with the diſtant idea of this felicity. It appears in his fancy like the life of ſome ſuperior rank of beings, and, in order to arrive at it, he devotes himſelf for ever to the purſuit of wealth and greatneſs. To obtain the conveniencies which theſe afford he ſubmits in the firſt year, nay in the firſt month of his application, to more fatigue of body and more uneaſineſs of mind than he could have ſuffered through the whole of his life from the want of them. He ſtudies to diſtinguiſh himſelf in ſome laborious profeſſion. With the moſt unrelenting induſ-

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try he labours night and day to acquire talents superior to all his competitors. He endeavours next to bring those talents into public view, and with equal assiduity solicits every opportunity of employment. For this purpose he makes his court to all mankind; he serves those whom he hates, and is obsequious to those whom he despises. Through the whole of his life he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose which he may never arrive at, for which he sacrifices a real tranquillity that is at all times in his power, and which, if in the extremity of old age he should at last attain to it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it. It is then, in the last dregs of life, his body wasted with toil and diseases, his mind gauled and ruffled by the memory of a thousand injuries and disappointments which he imagines he has met with from the injustice of his enemies, or from the perfidy and ingratitude of his friends, that he begins at last to find that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys; and like them too more troublesome to the person who carries them about with him than all the advantages they can afford him are commodious. There is no other real difference between them, except that the conveniencies of the one are somewhat more observable than those of the other. The palaces, the

the gardens, the equipage, the retinue of the great are objects of which the obvious conveniency ſtrikes every body. They do not require that their maſters ſhould point out to us wherein conſiſts their utility. Of our own accord we readily enter into it, and by ſympathy enjoy and thereby applaud the ſatisfaction which they are fitted to afford him. But the curioſity of a tooth-pick, of an ear-picker, of a machine for cutting the nails, or of any other trinket of the ſame kind, is not ſo obvious. Their conveniency may perhaps be equally great, but it is not ſo ſtriking, and we do not ſo readily enter into the ſatisfaction of the man who poſſeſſes them. They are therefore leſs reaſonable ſubjects of vanity than the magnificence of wealth and greatneſs; and in this conſiſts the ſole advantage of theſe laſt. They more effectually gratify that love of diſtinction ſo natural to man. To one who was to live alone in a deſolate iſland it might be a matter of doubt, perhaps, whether a palace, or a collection of ſuch ſmall conveniencies as are commonly contained in a tweezer-caſe, would contribute moſt to his happineſs and enjoyment. If he is to live in ſociety, indeed, there can be no compariſon, becauſe in this, as in all other caſes, we conſtantly pay more regard to the ſentiments of the ſpectator, than to thoſe of the perſon principally concerned, and conſider rather how his ſituation will appear to other people, than how it will appear to himſelf. If we examine, however, why the ſpectator diſtinguiſhes with ſuch

ſuch admiration the condition of the rich and the great, we ſhall find that it is not ſo much upon account of the ſuperior eaſe or pleaſure which they are ſuppoſed to enjoy, as of the numberleſs artificial and elegant contrivances for promoting this eaſe or pleaſure. He does not even imagine that they are really happier than other people: but he imagines that they poſſeſs more means of happineſs. And it is the ingenious and artful adjuſtment of thoſe means to the end for which they were intended, that is the principal ſource of his admiration. But in the languor of diſeaſe, and the wearineſs of old age, the pleaſures of the vain and empty diſtinctions of greatneſs diſappear. To one, in this ſituation, they are no longer capable of recommending thoſe toilſome purſuits in which they had formerly engaged him. In his heart he curſes ambition, and vainly regrets the eaſe and the indolence of youth, pleaſures which are fled for ever, and which he has fooliſhly ſacrificed for what, when he has got it, can afford him no real ſatisfaction. In this miſerable aſpect does greatneſs appear to every man when reduced either by ſpleen or diſeaſe to obſerve with attention his own ſituation, and to conſider what it is that is really wanting to his happineſs. Power and riches appear then to be, what they are, enormous and operoſe machines, contrived to produce a few trifling conveniencies to the body, conſiſting of ſprings the moſt nice and delicate, which muſt be kept in order with the moſt anxious attention, and which in ſpite of all

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our care are ready every moment to burſt into pieces, and to cruſh in their ruins their unfortunate poſſeſſor. They are immenſe fabrics, which it requires the labour of a life to raiſe, which threaten every moment to overwhelm the perſon that dwells in them, and which while they ſtand, though they may ſave him from ſome ſmaller inconveniencies, can protect him from none of the ſeverer inclemencies of the ſeaſon. They keep off the ſummer ſhower, not the winter ſtorm, but leave him always as much, and ſometimes more expoſed than before, to anxiety, to fear, and to ſorrow; to diſeaſes, to danger, and to death.

But though this ſplenetic philoſophy, which in time of ſickneſs or low ſpirits is familiar to every man, thus entirely depreciates thoſe great objects of human deſire, when in better health and in better humour, we never fail to regard them under a more agreeable aſpect. Our imagination, which in pain and ſorrow ſeems to be confined and cooped up within our own perſons, in times of eaſe and proſperity expands itſelf to every thing around us. We are then charmed with the beauty of that accommodation which reigns in the palaces and œconomy of the great; and admire how every thing is adapted to promote their eaſe, to prevent their wants, to gratify their wiſhes, and to amuſe and entertain their moſt frivolous deſires. If we conſider the real ſatisfaction which all theſe things are capable of affording, by itſelf and ſeparated from the beauty of that

that arrangement which is fitted to promote it, it will always appear in the highest degree contemptible and trifling. But we rarely view it in this abstract and philosophical light. We naturally confound it in our imagination with the order, the regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or œconomy by means of which it is produced. The pleasures of wealth and greatness, when considered in this complex view, strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth all the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it.

And it is well that nature imposes upon us in this manner. It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind. It is this which first prompted them to cultivate the ground, to build houses, to found cities and commonwealths, and to invent and improve all the sciences and arts, which ennoble and embellish human life; which have entirely changed the whole face of the globe, have turned the rude forests of nature into agreeable and fertile plains, and made the trackless and barren ocean a new fund of subsistence, and the great high road of communication to the different nations of the earth. The earth by these labours of mankind has been obliged to redouble her natural fertility, and to maintain a greater multitude of inhabitants. It is to no purpose, that the proud and unfeeling landlord views his extensive fields, and without a thought

for the wants of his brethren, in imagination consumes himself the whole harvest that grows upon them. The homely and vulgar proverb, that the eye is larger than the belly, never was more fully verified than with regard to him. The capacity of his stomach bears no proportion to the immensity of his desires, and will receive no more than that of the meanest peasant. The rest he is obliged to distribute among those, who prepare, in the nicest manner, that little which he himself makes use of, among those who fit up the palace in which this little is to be consumed, among those who provide and keep in order all the different baubles and trinkets, which are employed in the oeconomy of greatness; all of whom thus derive from his luxury and caprice, that share of the necessaries of life, which they would in vain have expected from his humanity or his justice. The produce of the soil maintains at all times nearly that number of inhabitants, which it is capable of maintaining. The rich only select from the heap what is most precious and agreeable. They consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been

made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the intereſt of the ſociety, and afford means to the multiplication of the ſpecies. When providence divided the earth among a few lordly maſters, it neither forgot nor abandoned thoſe who ſeemed to have been left out in the partition. Theſe laſt too enjoy their ſhare of all that it produces. In what conſtitutes the real happineſs of human life, they are in no reſpect inferior to thoſe who would ſeem ſo much above them. In eaſe of body and peace of mind, all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level, and the beggar, who ſuns himſelf by the ſide of the highway, poſſeſſes that ſecurity which kings are fighting for.

The ſame principle, the ſame love of ſyſtem, the ſame regard to the beauty of order, of art and contrivance, frequently ſerves to recommend thoſe inſtitutions, which tend to promote the public welfare. When a patriot exerts himſelf for the improvement of any part of the public police, his conduct does not always ariſe from pure ſympathy with the happineſs of thoſe, who are to reap the benefit of it. It is not commonly from a fellow-feeling with carriers and waggoners that a public-ſpirited man encourages the mending of high roads. When the legiſlature eſtabliſhes præmiums and other encouragements to advance the linen or woollen manufactures,

tures, its conduct ſeldom proceeds from pure ſympathy with the wearer of cheap or fine cloth, and much leſs from that with the manufacturer, or merchant. The perfection of police, the extenſion of trade and manufactures, are noble and magnificent objects. The contemplation of them pleaſes us, and we are intereſted in whatever can tend to advance them. They make part of the great ſyſtem of government, and the wheels of the political machine ſeem to move with more harmony and eaſe by means of them. We take pleaſure in beholding the perfection of ſo beautiful and grand a ſyſtem, and we are uneaſy till we remove any obſtruction that can in the leaſt diſturb or incumber the regularity of its motions. All conſtitutions of government, however, are valued only in proportion, as they tend to promote the happineſs of thoſe who live under them. This is their ſole uſe and end. From a certain ſpirit of ſyſtem, however, from a certain love of art and contrivance, we ſometimes ſeem to value the means more than the end, and to be eager to promote the happineſs of our fellow-creatures, rather from a view to perfect and improve a certain beautiful and orderly ſyſtem, than from any immediate ſenſe or feeling of what they either ſuffer or enjoy. There have been men of the greateſt public ſpirit, who have ſhown themſelves in other reſpects not very ſenſible to the feelings of humanity. And on the contrary, there have been men of the greateſt humanity, who ſeem to have

been entirely devoid of public ſpirit. Every man may find in the circle of his acquaintance inſtances both of the one kind and the other. Who had ever leſs humanity, or more public ſpirit, than the celebrated legiſlator of Muſcovy? The ſocial and well natured James the firſt of Great-Britain ſeems, on the contrary, to have had ſcarce any paſſion, either for the glory, or the intereſt of his country. Would you awaken the induſtry of the man, who ſeems almoſt dead to ambition, it will often be to no purpoſe to deſcribe to him the happineſs of the rich and the great; to tell him that they are generally ſheltered from the ſun and the rain, that they are ſeldom hungry, that they are ſeldom cold, and that they are rarely expoſed to wearineſs, or to want of any kind. The moſt eloquent exhortation of this kind will have little effect upon him. If you would hope to ſucceed, you muſt deſcribe to him the conveniency and arrangement of the different apartments in their palaces; you muſt explain to him the propriety of their equipages, and point out to him the number, the order, and the different offices of all their attendants. If any thing is capable of making impreſſion upon him, this will. Yet all theſe things tend only to keep off the ſun and the rain, to ſave them from hunger and cold, from want and wearineſs. In the ſame manner, if you would implant public virtue in the breaſt of him, who ſeems heedleſs of the intereſt of his country, it will often be to no purpoſe to tell him, what ſuperior advan-

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tages the ſubjects of a well-governed ſtate enjoy; that they are better lodged, that they are better cloathed, that they are better fed. Theſe conſiderations will commonly make no great impreſſion. You will be more likely to perſuade, if you deſcribe the great ſyſtem of public police which procures theſe advantages, if you explain the connections and dependencies of its ſeveral parts, their mutual ſubordination to one another, and their general ſubſerviency to the happineſs of the ſociety; if you ſhow how this ſyſtem might be introduced into his own country, what it is that hinders it from taking place there at preſent, how thoſe obſtructions might be removed, and all the ſeveral wheels of the machine of government be made to move with more harmony and ſmoothneſs, without grating upon one another, or mutually retarding one another's motions. It is ſcarce poſſible that a man ſhould liſten to a diſcourſe of this kind, and not feel himſelf animated to ſome degree of public ſpirit. He will, at leaſt for the moment, feel ſome deſire to remove thoſe obſtructions, and to put into motion ſo beautiful and ſo orderly a machine. Nothing tends ſo much to promote public ſpirit as the ſtudy of politics, of the ſeveral ſyſtems of civil government, their advantages and diſadvantages, of the conſtitution of our own country, its ſituation, and intereſt with regard to foreign nations, its commerce, its defence, the diſadvantages it labours under, the dangers to which it may be expoſed, how to remove

the one, and how to guard against the other. Upon this account political disquisitions, if just, and reasonable, and practicable, are of all the works of speculation the most useful. Even the weakest and the worst of them are not altogether without their utility. They serve at least to animate the public passions of men, and rouze them to seek out the means of promoting the happiness of the society.

CHAP. II.

Of the beauty which the appearance of utility bestows upon the characters and actions of men; and how far the perception of this beauty may be regarded as one of the original principles of approbation.

THE characters of men, as well as the contrivances of art, or the institutions of civil government, may be fitted either to promote or to disturb the happiness both of the individual and of the society. The prudent, the equitable, the active, resolute and sober character promises prosperity and satisfaction, both to the person himself and to every one connected with him. The rash, the insolent, the slothful, effeminate and voluptuous, on the contrary, forbodes ruin to the individual, and misfortune to all who have any thing to do with him. The first turn of mind has at least all the beauty which can belong to the most perfect machine that was ever invented for

for promoting the moſt agreeable purpoſe: and the ſecond all the deformity of the moſt aukward and clumſy contrivance. What inſtitution of government could tend ſo much to promote the happineſs of mankind as the general prevalence of wiſdom and virtue? All government is but an imperfect remedy for the deficiency of theſe. Whatever beauty, therefore, can belong to civil government upon account of its utility, muſt in a far ſuperior degree belong to theſe. On the contrary, what civil policy can be ſo ruinous and deſtructive as the vices of men. The fatal effects of bad government ariſe from nothing, but that it does not ſufficiently guard againſt the miſchiefs which human wickedneſs gives occaſion to.

This beauty and deformity which characters appear to derive from their uſefulneſs or inconveniency, are apt to ſtrike, in a peculiar manner, thoſe who conſider, in an abſtract and philoſophical light, the actions and conduct of mankind. When a philoſopher goes to examine why humanity is approved of, or cruelty condemned, he does not always form to himſelf, in a very clear and diſtinct manner, the conception of any one particular action either of cruelty or of humanity, but is commonly contented with the vague and indeterminate idea which the general names of thoſe qualities ſuggeſt to him. But it is in particular inſtances only that the propriety or impropriety, the merit or demerit of actions

is very obvious and discernible. It is only when particular examples are given that we perceive distinctly either the concord or disagreement between our own affections and those of the agent, or feel a social gratitude arise towards him in the one case, or a sympathetic resentment in the other. When we consider virtue and vice in an abstract and general manner, the qualities by which they excite these several sentiments seem in a great measure to disappear, and the sentiments themselves become less obvious and discernible. On the contrary, the happy effects of the one and the fatal consequences of the other seem then to rise up to the view, and as it were to stand out and distinguish themselves from all the other qualities of either.

The same ingenious and agreeable author who first explained why utility pleases, has been so struck with this view of things, as to resolve our whole approbation of virtue into a perception of this species of beauty which results from the appearance of utility. No qualities of the mind, he observes, are approved of as virtuous, but such as are useful or agreeable either to the person himself or to others; and no qualities are disapproved of as vitious but such as have a contrary tendency. And nature, indeed, seems to have so happily adjusted our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, to the conveniency both of the individual and of the society, that after the strictest examination it will be found,

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I believe, that this is univerſally the caſe. But ſtill I affirm, that it is not the view of this utility or hurtfulneſs which is either the firſt or principal ſource of our approbation and diſapprobation. Theſe ſentiments are no doubt enhanced and enlivened by the perception of the beauty or deformity which reſults from this utility or hurtfulneſs. But ſtill, I ſay, they are originally and eſſentially different from this perception.

For firſt of all, it ſeems impoſſible that the approbation of virtue ſhould be a ſentiment of the ſame kind with that by which we approve of a convenient and well contrived building; or that we ſhould have no other reaſon for praiſing a man than that for which we commend a cheſt of drawers.

And ſecondly, it will be found, upon examination, that the uſefulneſs of any diſpoſition of mind is ſeldom the firſt ground of our approbation; and that the ſentiment of approbation always involves in it a ſenſe of propriety quite diſtinct from the perception of utility. We may obſerve this with regard to all the qualities which are approved of as virtuous, both thoſe which, according to this ſyſtem, are originally valued as uſeful to ourſelves, as well as thoſe which are eſteemed on account of their uſefulneſs to others.

The qualities moſt uſeful to ourſelves are, firſt of all, ſuperior reaſon and underſtanding, by which we are capable of diſcerning the remote conſequences of all our actions, and of forſeeing the advantage or detriment

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which is likely to reſult from them: and ſecondly, ſelf-command, by which we are enabled to abſtain from preſent pleaſure or to endure preſent pain, in order to obtain a greater pleaſure or to avoid a greater pain in ſome future time. In the union of thoſe two qualities conſiſts the virtue of prudence, of all the virtues that which is moſt uſeful to the individual.

With regard to the firſt of thoſe qualities, it has been obſerved on a former occaſion, that ſuperior reaſon and underſtanding are originally approved of as juſt and right and accurate, and not meerly as uſeful or advantageous. It is in the abſtruſer ſciences, particularly in the higher parts of mathematics, that the greateſt and moſt admired exertions of human reaſon have been diſplayed. But the utility of thoſe ſciences, either to the individual or to the public, is not very obvious, and to prove it requires a diſcuſſion which is not always very eaſily comprehended. It was not, therefore, their utility which firſt recommended them to the public admiration. This quality was but little inſiſted upon, till it became neceſſary to make ſome reply to the reproaches of thoſe, who, having themſelves no taſte for ſuch ſublime diſcoveries, endeavoured to depreciate them as uſeleſs.

That ſelf-command, in the ſame manner, by which we reſtrain our preſent appetites, in order to gratify them more fully upon another occaſion, is approved of, as much under the aſpect of propriety, as under that of utility.

lity. When we act in this manner, the sentiments which influence our conduct seem exactly to coincide with those of the spectator. The spectator does not feel the sollicitations of our present appetites. To him the pleasure which we are to enjoy a week hence, or a year hence, is just as interesting as that which we are to enjoy this moment. When for the sake of the present, therefore, we sacrifice the future, our conduct appears to him absurd and extravagant in the highest degree, and he cannot enter into the principles which influence it. On the contrary, when we abstain from present pleasure, in order to secure greater pleasure to come, when we act as if the remote object interested us as much as that which immediately presses upon the senses, as our affections exactly correspond with his own, he cannot fail to approve of our behaviour: and as he knows from experience, how few are capable of this self-command, he looks upon our conduct with a considerable degree of wonder and admiration. Hence arises that eminent esteem with which all men naturally regard a steady perseverance in the practice of frugality, industry and application, though directed to no other purpose than the acquisition of fortune. The resolute firmness of the person who acts in this manner, and in order to obtain a great though remote advantage, not only gives up all present pleasures, but endures the greatest labour both of mind and body, necessarily commands our approbation. That view of his interest and happiness

pineſs which appears to regulate his conduct, exactly tallies with the idea which we naturally form of it. There is the moſt perfect correſpondence between his ſentiments and our own, and at the ſame time, from our experience of the common weakneſs of human nature, it is a correſpondence which we could not reaſonably have expected. We not only approve, therefore, but in ſome meaſure admire his conduct, and think it worthy of a conſiderable degree of applauſe. It is the conſciouſneſs of this merited approbation and eſteem which is alone capable of ſupporting the agent in this tenor of conduct. The pleaſure which we are to enjoy ten years hence intereſts us ſo little in compariſon with that which we may enjoy to-day, the paſſion which the firſt excites, is naturally ſo weak in compariſon with that violent emotion which the ſecond is apt to give occaſion to, that the one could never be any balance to the other, unleſs it was ſupported by the ſenſe of propriety, by the conſciouſneſs that we merited the eſteem and approbation of every body, by acting in the one way, and that we became the proper objects of their contempt and deriſion by behaving in the other.

Humanity, juſtice, generoſity and public ſpirit, are the qualities moſt uſeful to others. Wherein conſiſts the propriety of humanity and juſtice has been explained upon a former occaſion, where it was ſhewn how much our eſteem and approbation of thoſe qualities depended upon the concord between the affections

tions of the agent and thoſe of the ſpectators.

The propriety of generoſity and public ſpirit is founded upon the ſame principle with that of juſtice. Generoſity is different from humanity. Thoſe two qualities, which at firſt ſight ſeem ſo nearly allied, do not always belong to the ſame perſon. Humanity is the virtue of a woman, generoſity of man. The fair ſex, who have commonly much more tenderneſs than ours, have ſeldom ſo much generoſity. That women rarely make conſiderable donations is an obſervation of the civil law *. Humanity conſiſts merely in the exquiſite fellow-feeling which the ſpectator entertains with the ſentiments of the perſons principally concerned, ſo as to grieve for their ſufferings, to reſent their injuries, and to rejoice at their good fortune. The moſt humane actions require no ſelf-denial, no ſelf-command, no great exertion of the ſenſe of propriety. They conſiſt only in doing what this exquiſite ſympathy would of its own accord prompt us to do. But it is otherwiſe with generoſity. We never are generous except when in ſome reſpect we prefer ſome other perſon to ourſelves, and ſacrifice ſome great and important intereſt of our own to an equal intereſt of a friend or of a ſuperior. The man who gives up his pretenſions to an office that was the great object of his ambition, becauſe he imagines that the ſervices of another are better entitled to it; the man who expoſes his life to defend

* Raro mulieres donare ſolent.

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that of his friend, which he judges to be of more importance, neither of them act from humanity, or becauſe they feel more exquiſitely what concerns that other perſon than what concerns themſelves. They both conſider thoſe oppoſite intereſts not in the light in which they naturally appear to themſelves, but in that in which they appear to others. To every byſtander, the ſucceſs or preſervation of this other perſon may juſtly be more intereſting than their own; but it cannot be ſo to themſelves. When to the intereſt of this other perſon, therefore, they ſacrifice their own; they accommodate themſelves to the ſentiments of the ſpectator, and by an effort of magnanimity act according to thoſe views of things which, they feel, muſt naturally occur to any third perſon. The ſoldier who throws away his life in order to defend that of his officer, would perhaps be but little affected by the death of that officer, if it ſhould happen without any fault of his own; and a very ſmall diſaſter which had befallen himſelf might excite a much more lively ſorrow. But when he endeavours to act ſo as to deſerve applauſe, and to make the impartial ſpectator enter into the principles of his conduct, he feels, that to every body but himſelf, his own life is a trifle compared with that of his officer, and that when he ſacrifices the one to the other, he acts quite properly and agreeably to what would be the natural apprehenſions of every impartial byſtander:

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It is the ſame caſe with the greater exertions of public ſpirit. When a young officer expoſes his life to acquire ſome inconſiderable addition to the dominions of his ſovereign, it is not, becauſe the acquiſition of the new territory is, to himſelf, an object more deſirable than the preſervation of his own life. To him his own life is of infinitely more value than the conqueſt of a whole kingdom for the ſtate which he ſerves. But when he compares thoſe two objects with one another, he does not view them in the light, in which they naturally appear to himſelf, but in that, in which they appear to the nation he fights for. To them the ſucceſs of the war is of the higheſt importance; the life of a private perſon of ſcarce any conſequence. When he puts himſelf in their ſituation, he immediately feels that he cannot be too prodigal of his blood, if, by ſhedding it, he can promote ſo valuable a purpoſe. In thus thwarting, from a ſenſe of duty and propriety, the ſtrongeſt of all natural propenſities, conſiſts the heroiſm of his conduct. There is many an honeſt Engliſhman, who, in his private ſtation, would be more ſeriouſly diſturbed by the loſs of a guinea, than by the national loſs of Minorca, who yet, had it been in his power to defend that fortreſs, would have ſacrificed his life a thouſand times, rather than, through his fault, have let it fall into the hands of the enemy. When the firſt Brutus led forth his own ſons to a capital puniſhment, becauſe they had conſpired

ſpired againſt the riſing liberty of Rome, he ſacrificed what, if he had conſulted his own breaſt only, would appear to be the ſtronger to the weaker affection. Brutus ought naturally to have felt much more for the death of his own ſons, than for all that probably Rome could have ſuffered from the want of ſo great an example. But he viewed them, not with the eyes of a father, but with thoſe of a Roman citizen. He entered ſo thoroughly into the ſentiments of this laſt character, that he paid no regard to that tye, by which he himſelf was connected with them; and to a Roman citizen, the ſons even of Brutus ſeemed contemptible, when put into the balance with the ſmalleſt intereſt of Rome. In theſe and in all other caſes of this kind, our admiration is not ſo much founded upon the utility, as upon the unexpected, and on that account the great, the noble and exalted propriety of ſuch actions. This utility, when we come to view it, beſtows upon them, undoubtedly, a new beauty, and upon that account ſtill further recommends them to our approbation. This beauty, however, is chiefly perceived by men of reflection and ſpeculation, and is by no means the quality which firſt recommends ſuch actions to the natural ſentiments of the bulk of mankind.

It is to be obſerved, that ſo far as the ſentiment of approbation ariſes from the perception of this beauty of utility, it has no reference of any kind to the ſentiments of others.

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If it was possible, therefore, that a person should grow up to manhood without any communication with society, his own actions might, notwithstanding, be agreeable or disagreeable to him on account of their tendency to his happiness or disadvantage. He might perceive a beauty of this kind in prudence, temperance and good conduct, and a deformity in the opposite behaviour: He might view his own temper and character with that sort of satisfaction with which we consider a well contrived machine, in the one case; or with that sort of distaste and dissatisfaction with which we regard a very aukward and clumsy contrivance, in the other. As these perceptions, however, are meerly a matter of taste, and have all the feebleness and delicacy of that species of perceptions, upon the justness of which what is properly called taste is founded, they probably would not be much attended to by one in his solitary and miserable condition. Even though they should occur to him, they would by no means have the same effect upon him, antecedent to his connection with society, which they would have in consequence of that connection. He would not be cast down with inward shame at the thought of this deformity; nor would he be elevated with secret triumph of mind from the consciousness of the contrary beauty. He would not exult from the notion of deserving reward in the one case, nor tremble from the suspicion of meriting punishment in the other. All such sentiments suppose the idea of some

other being, who is the natural judge of the person that feels them; and it is only by sympathy with the decisions of this arbiter of his conduct, that he can conceive, either the triumph of self-applause, or the shame of self-condemnation.

PART

PART V.

Of the INFLUENCE of CUSTOM and FASHION upon the ſentiments of moral approbation and diſapprobation.

Conſiſting of one Section.

CHAP. I.

Of the influence of cuſtom and faſhion upon our notions of beauty and deformity.

THERE are other principles, beſides thoſe already enumerated, which have a conſiderable influence upon the moral ſentiments of mankind, and are the chief cauſes of the many irregular and diſcordant opinions which prevail in different ages and nations concerning what is blameable or praiſe-worthy. Theſe principles are cuſtom and faſhion, principles which extend their dominion over our judgments concerning beauty of every kind.

When two objects have frequently been ſeen together, the imagination acquires a habit of paſſing eaſily from the one to the other. If the firſt appears, we lay our account that the ſecond is to follow. Of their own accord

they put us in mind of one another, and the attention glides easily along them. Though, independent of custom, there should be no real beauty in their union, yet when custom has thus connected them together, we feel an impropriety in their separation. The one we think is aukward when it appears without its usual companion. We miss something which we expected to find, and the habitual arrangement of our ideas is disturbed by the disappointment. A suit of cloaths, for example, seems to want something if they are without the most insignificant ornament which usually accompanies them, and we find a meanness or aukwardness in the absence even of a haunch button. When there is any natural propriety in the union, custom increases our sense of it, and makes a different arrangement appear still more disagreeable than it would otherwise seem to be. Those, who have been accustomed to see things in a good taste, are more disgusted by whatever is clumsy or aukward. Where the conjunction is improper, custom either diminishes, or takes away altogether, our sense of the impropriety. Those who have been accustomed to slovenly disorder lose all sense of neatness or elegance. The modes of furniture or dress which seem ridiculous to strangers, give no offence to the people who are used to them.

Fashion is different from custom, or rather is a particular species of it. That is not the fashion which every body wears, but which those wear who are of a high rank, or character,

racter. The graceful, the easy and commanding manners of the great, joined to the usual richness and magnificence of their dress, give a grace to the very form which they happen to bestow upon it. As long as they continue to use this form, it is connected in our imaginations with the idea of something that is genteel and magnificent, and though in itself it should be indifferent, it seems, on account of this relation, to have something about it that is genteel and magnificent too. As soon as they drop it, it loses all the grace, which it had appeared to possess before, and being now used only by the inferior ranks of people, seems to have something of their meanness and aukwardness.

Dress and furniture are allowed by all the world to be entirely under the dominion of custom and fashion. The influence of those principles, however, is by no means confined to so narrow a sphere, but extends itself to whatever is in any respect the object of taste, to music, to poetry, to architecture. The modes of dress and furniture are continually changing, and that fashion appearing ridiculous to-day which was admired five years ago, we are experimentally convinced that it owed its vogue chiefly or entirely to custom and fashion. Cloaths and furniture are not made of very durable materials. A well fancied coat is done in a twelve month, and cannot continue longer to propagate, as the fashion, that form according to what it was made. The modes of furniture change less rapidly than

thoſe of dreſs; becauſe furniture is commonly more durable. In five or ſix years, however, it generally undergoes an entire revolution, and every man in his own time ſees the faſhion in this reſpect change many different ways. The productions of the other arts are much more laſting, and, when happily imagined, may continue to propagate the faſhion of their make for a much longer time. A well contrived building may endure many centuries: a beautiful air may be delivered down by a ſort of tradition, through many ſucceſſive generations: a well written poem may laſt as long as the world; and all of them continue, for ages together, to give the vogue to that particular ſtile, to that particular taſte or manner, according to which each of them was compoſed. Few men have an opportunity of ſeeing in their own times the faſhion in any of theſe arts change very conſiderably. Few men have ſo much experience and acquaintance with the different modes which have obtained in remote ages and nations, as to be thoroughly reconciled to them, or to judge with impartiality between them, and what takes place in their own age and country. Few men therefore are willing to allow that cuſtom or faſhion have much influence upon their judgments concerning what is beautiful, or otherwiſe, in the productions of any of thoſe arts; but imagine, that all the rules, which they think ought to be obſerved in each of them, are founded upon reaſon and nature, not upon habit or prejudice. A very little attention,

tention, however, may convince them of the contrary, and satisfy them, that the influence of custom and fashion over dress and furniture, is not more absolute than over architecture, poetry, and music.

Can any reason, for example, be assigned why the Doric capital should be appropriated to a pillar, whose height is equal to eight diameters; the Ionic volute to one of nine; and the Corinthian foliage to one of ten? The propriety of each of those appropriations can be founded upon nothing but habit and custom. The eye having been used to see a particular proportion connected with a particular ornament, would be offended if they were not joined together. Each of the five orders has its peculiar ornaments, which cannot be changed for any other, without giving offence to all those who know any thing of the rules of architecture. According to some architects, indeed, such is the exquisite judgment with which the antients have assigned to each order its proper ornaments, that no others can be found which are equally suitable. It seems, however, a little difficult to be conceived that these forms, though, no doubt, extremely agreeable, should be the only forms which can suit those proportions, or that there should not be five hundred others which, antecedent to established custom, would have fitted them equally well. When custom, however, has established particular rules of building, provided they are not absolutely unreasonable, it

is abſurd to think of altering them for others which are only equally good, or even for others which, in point of elegance and beauty, have naturally ſome little advantage over them. A man would be ridiculous who ſhould appear in public with a ſuit of cloaths quite different from thoſe which are commonly worn, though the new dreſs ſhould in itſelf be ever ſo graceful or convenient. And there ſeems to be an abſurdity of the ſame kind in ornamenting a houſe after a quite different manner from that which cuſtom and faſhion have preſcribed; though the new ornaments ſhould in themſelves be ſomewhat ſuperior to the common ones.

According to the antient rhetoricians, a certain meaſure or verſe was by nature appropriated to each particular ſpecies of writing, as being naturally expreſſive of that character, ſentiment or paſſion, which ought to predominate in it. One verſe, they ſaid, was fit for grave and another for gay works, which could not, they thought, be interchanged without the greateſt impropriety. The experience of modern times, however, ſeems to contradict this principle, though in itſelf it would appear to be extremely probable. What is the burleſque verſe in Engliſh is the heroic verſe in French. The tragedies of Racine and the Henriad of Voltaire, are in the ſame verſe with,

Thus ſaid to my lady the knight full of care.

The

The burleſque verſe in French, on the contrary, is pretty much the ſame with the heroic verſe of ten ſyllables in Engliſh. Cuſtom has made the one nation aſſociate the ideas of gravity, ſublimity and ſerioufneſs, to that meaſure which the other has connected with whatever is gay, flippant and ludicrous. Nothing would appear more abſurd in Engliſh than a tragedy written in the Alexandrine verſes of the French; or in French, than a work of the ſame kind in verſes of ten ſyllables.

An eminent artiſt will bring about a conſiderable change in the eſtabliſhed modes of each of thoſe arts, and introduce a new faſhion of writing, muſic, or architecture. As the dreſs of an agreeable man of high rank recommends itſelf, and how peculiar and fantaſtical ſoever, comes ſoon to be admired and imitated; ſo the excellencies of an eminent maſter recommend his peculiarities, and his manner becomes the faſhionable ſtile in the art which he practiſes. The taſte of the Italians in muſic and architecture has, within theſe fifty years, undergone a conſiderable change, from imitating the peculiarities of ſome eminent maſters in each of thoſe arts. Seneca is accuſed by Quintilian of having corrupted the taſte of the Romans, and of having introduced a frivolous prettineſs in the room of majeſtic reaſon and maſculine eloquence. Salluſt and Tacitus have by others been charged with the ſame accuſation, tho' in a different manner. They gave reputation, it

it is pretended, to a ſtile, which though in the higheſt degree conciſe, elegant, expreſſive, and even poetical, wanted, however, eaſe, ſimplicity, and nature, and was evidently the production of the moſt laboured and ſtudied affectation. How many great qualities muſt that writer poſſeſs who can thus render his very faults agreeable? After the praiſe of refining the taſte of a nation, the higheſt eulogy, perhaps, which can be beſtowed upon any author is to ſay, that he corrupted it. In our own language, Mr. Pope and Dr. Swift have each of them introduced a manner different from what was practiſed before, into all works that are written in rhyme, the one in long verſes, the other in ſhort. The quaintneſs of Butler has given place to the plainneſs of Swift. The rambling freedom of Dryden, and the correct but often tedious and proſaic languor of Addiſon, are no longer the objects of imitation, but all long verſes are now written after the manner of the nervous preciſion of Mr. Pope.

Neither is it only over the productions of the arts, that cuſtom and faſhion exert their dominion. They influence our judgments, in the ſame manner, with regard to the beauty of natural objects. What various and oppoſite forms are deemed beautiful in different ſpecies of things? The proportions which are admired in one animal, are altogether different from thoſe which are eſteemed in another. Every claſs of things has its own peculiar conformation, which is approved of, and

and has a beauty of its own, diſtinct from that of every other ſpecies. It is upon this account that a learned Jeſuit, father Buffier, has determined that the beauty of every object conſiſts in that form and colour, which is moſt uſual among things of that particular ſort to which it belongs. Thus, in the human form, the beauty of each feature lies in a certain middle equally removed from a variety of other forms that are ugly. A beautiful noſe, for example, is one that is neither very long, nor very ſhort, neither very ſtreight, nor very crooked, but a ſort of middle among all theſe extremes, and leſs different from any one of them, than all of them are from one another. It is the form which nature ſeems to have aimed at in them all, which, however, ſhe deviates from in a great variety of ways, and very ſeldom hits exactly; but to which all thoſe deviations ſtill bear a very ſtrong reſemblance. When a number of drawings are made after one pattern, though they may all miſs it in ſome reſpects, yet they will all reſemble it more than they reſemble one another; the general character of the pattern will run through them all; the moſt ſingular and odd will be thoſe which are moſt wide of it; and though very few will copy it exactly, yet the moſt accurate delineations will bear a greater reſemblance to the moſt careleſs, than the careleſs ones will bear to one another. In the ſame manner, in each ſpecies of creatures, what is moſt beautiful bears the ſtrongeſt characters of the general fabric of the ſpecies, and has the

ſtrongeſt reſemblance to the greater part of the individuals with which it is claſſed. Monſters, on the contrary, or what is perfectly deformed, are always moſt ſingular and odd, and have the leaſt reſemblance to the generality of that ſpecies to which they belong. And thus the beauty of each ſpecies, though in one ſenſe the rareſt of all things, becauſe few individuals hit this middle form exactly, yet in another, is the moſt common, becauſe all the deviations from it reſemble it more than they reſemble one another. The moſt cuſtomary form, therefore, is in each ſpecies of things, according to him, the moſt beautiful. And hence it is that a certain practice and experience in contemplating each ſpecies of objects is requiſite, before we can judge of its beauty, or know wherein the middle and moſt uſual form conſiſts. The niceſt judgment concerning the beauty of the human ſpecies, will not help us to judge of that of flowers, or horſes, or any other ſpecies of things. It is for the ſame reaſon that in different climates and where different cuſtoms and ways of living take place, as the generality of any ſpecies receives a different conformation from thoſe circumſtances, ſo different ideas of its beauty prevail. The beauty of a Mooriſh is not exactly the ſame with that of an Engliſh horſe. What different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human ſhape and countenance? A fair complexion is a ſhocking deformity upon the coaſt of Guinea. Thick lips and a flat noſe are a beauty. In ſome

ſome nations long ears that hang down upon the ſhoulders are the objects of univerſal admiration. In China if a lady's foot is ſo large as to be fit to walk upon, ſhe is regarded as a monſter of uglineſs. Some of the ſavage nations in North-America tie four boards round the heads of their children, and thus ſqueeze them, while the bones are tender and griſtly, into a form that is almoſt perfectly ſquare. Europeans are aſtoniſhed at the abſurd barbarity of this practice, to which ſome miſſionaries have imputed the ſingular ſtupidity of thoſe nations among whom it prevails. But when they condemn thoſe ſavages, they do not reflect that the ladies in Europe had, till within theſe very few years, been endeavouring, for near a century paſt, to ſqueeze the beautiful roundneſs of their natural ſhape into a ſquare form of the ſame kind. And that notwithſtanding the many diſtortions and diſeaſes which this practice was known to occaſion, cuſtom had rendered it agreeable among ſome of the moſt civilized nations, which, perhaps, the world ever beheld.

Such is the ſyſtem of this learned and ingenious father, concerning the nature of beauty; of which the whole charm, according to him, would thus ſeem to ariſe from its falling in with the habits which cuſtom had impreſſed upon the imagination, with regard to things of each particular kind. I cannot, however, be induced to believe that our ſenſe even of external beauty is founded altogether on cuſtom. The utility of any form, its fitneſs for

for the uſeful purpoſes for which it was intended, evidently recommends it, and renders it agreeable to us independent of cuſtom. Certain colours are more agreeable than others, and give more delight to the eye the firſt time it ever beholds them. A ſmooth ſurface is more agreeable than a rough one. Variety is more pleaſing than a tedious undiverſified uniformity. Connected variety, in which each new appearance ſeems to be introduced by what went before it, and in which all the adjoining parts ſeem to have ſome natural relation to one another, is more agreeable than a disjointed and diſorderly aſſemblage of unconnected objects. But though I cannot admit that cuſtom is the ſole principle of beauty, yet I can ſo far allow the truth of this ingenious ſyſtem as to grant, that there is ſcarce any one external form ſo beautiful as to pleaſe, if quite contrary to cuſtom and unlike whatever we have been uſed to in that particular ſpecies of things: or ſo deformed as not to be agreeable, if cuſtom uniformly ſupports it, and habituates us to ſee it in every ſingle individual of the kind.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the influence of custom and fashion upon moral sentiments.

SINCE our sentiments concerning beauty of every kind, are so much influenced by custom and fashion, it cannot be expected, that those, concerning the beauty of conduct, should be entirely exempted from the dominion of those principles. Their influence here, however, seems to be much less than it is every where else. There is, perhaps, no form of external objects, how absurd and fantastical soever, to which custom will not reconcile us, or which fashion will not render even agreeable. But the characters and conduct of a Nero, or a Claudius, are what no custom will ever reconcile us to, what no fashion will ever render agreeable; but the one will always be the object of dread and hatred; the other of scorn and derision. The principles of the imagination, upon which our sense of beauty depends, are of a very nice and delicate nature, and may easily be altered by habit and education: but the sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation, are founded on the strongest and most vigorous passions of human nature; and though they may be somewhat warpt, cannot be entirely perverted.

But

But though the influence of cuſtom and faſhion, upon moral ſentiments, is not altogether ſo great, it is however perfectly ſimilar to what it is every where elſe. When cuſtom and faſhion coincide with the natural principles of right and wrong, they heighten the delicacy of our ſentiments, and increaſe our abhorrence for every thing which approaches to evil. Thoſe who have been educated in what is really good company, not in what is commonly called ſuch, who have been accuſtomed to ſee nothing in the perſons whom they eſteemed and lived with, but juſtice, modeſty, humanity, and good order; are more ſhocked with whatever ſeems to be inconſiſtent with the rules which thoſe virtues preſcribe. Thoſe, on the contrary, who have had the misfortune to be brought up amidſt violence, licentiouſneſs, falſhood and injuſtice; loſe, though not all ſenſe of the impropriety of ſuch conduct, yet all ſenſe of its dreadful enormity, or of the vengeance and puniſhment due to it. They have been familiarized with it from their infancy, cuſtom has rendered it habitual to them, and they are very apt to regard it as, what is called, the way of the world, ſomething which either may, or muſt be practiſed, to hinder us from being the dupes of our own inegrity.

Faſhion too will ſometimes give reputation to a certain degree of diſorder, and on the contrary, diſcountenance qualities which deſerve eſteem. In the reign of Charles II. a degree of licentiouſneſs was deemed the characteriſtic

racteriſtic of a liberal education. It was connected, according to the notions of thoſe times, with generoſity, ſincerity, magnanimity, loyalty, and proved that the perſon who acted in this manner, was a gentleman, and not a puritan; ſeverity of manners, and regularity of conduct, on the other hand, were altogether unfaſhionable, and were connected, in the imagination of that age, with cant, cunning, hypocriſy, and low manners. To ſuperficial minds, the vices of the great ſeem at all times agreeable. They connect them, not only with the ſplendour of fortune, but with many ſuperior virtues, which they aſcribe to their ſuperiors; with the ſpirit of freedom and independency, with frankneſs, generoſity, humanity and politeneſs. The virtues of the inferior ranks of people, on the contrary, their parſimonious frugality, their painful induſtry, and rigid adherence to rules, ſeem to them mean and diſagreeable. They connect them, both with the meanneſs of the ſtation to which thoſe qualities commonly belong, and with many great vices, which, they ſuppoſe, uſually accompany them; ſuch as an abject, cowardly, ill-natured, lying, pilfering diſpoſition.

The objects with which men in the different profeſſions and ſtates of life are converſant, being very different, and habituating them to very different paſſions, naturally form in them very different characters and manners. We expect in each rank and profeſſion, a degree of thoſe manners, which, experience has taught us, belong to it. But as in each ſpecies

of things, we are particularly pleaſed with the middle conformation, which in every part and feature agrees moſt exactly with the general ſtandard which nature ſeems to have eſtabliſhed for things of that kind; ſo in each rank, or, if I may ſay ſo, in each ſpecies of men, we are particularly pleaſed, if they have neither too much, nor too little of the character which uſually accompanies their particular condition and ſituation. A man, we ſay, ſhould look like his trade and profeſſion; yet the pedantry of every profeſſion is diſagreeable. The different periods of life have, for the ſame reaſon, different manners aſſigned to them. We expect in old age, that gravity and ſedateneſs which its infirmities, its long experience, and its worn out ſenſibility ſeem to render both natural and reſpectable; and we lay our account to find in youth that ſenſibility, that gaiety and ſprightly vivacity which experience teaches us to expect from the lively impreſſions that all intereſting objects are apt to make upon the tender and unpractiſed ſenſes of that early period of life. Each of thoſe two ages, however, may eaſily have too much of theſe peculiarities which belong to it. The flirting levity of youth, and the immovable inſenſibility of old age, are equally diſagreeable. The young, according to the common ſaying, are moſt agreeable when in their behaviour there is ſomething of the manners of the old, and the old, when they retain ſomething of the gaiety of the young. Either of them, however, may eaſily have

too much of the manners of the other. The extreme coldneſs, and dull formality, which are pardoned in old age, make youth ridiculous. The levity, the careleſſneſs, and the vanity, which are indulged in youth, render old age contemptible.

The peculiar character and manners which we are led by cuſtom to appropriate to each rank and profeſſion, have ſometimes perhaps a propriety independent of cuſtom; and are what we ſhould approve of for their own ſakes, if we took into conſideration all the different circumſtances which naturally affect thoſe in each different ſtate of life. The propriety of a perſon's behaviour, depends not upon its ſuitableneſs to any one circumſtance of his ſituation, but to all the circumſtances, which, when we bring his caſe home to ourſelves we feel, ſhould naturally call upon his attention. If he appears to be ſo much occupied by any one of them, as entirely to neglect the reſt, we diſapprove of his conduct, as ſomething which we cannot entirely go along with, becauſe not properly adjuſted to all the circumſtances of his ſituation: yet, perhaps, the emotion he expreſſes for the object which principally intereſts him, does not exceed what we ſhould entirely ſympathiſe with, and approve of, in one whoſe attention was not required by any other thing. A parent in private life might, upon the loſs of an only ſon, expreſs without blame, a degree of grief and tenderneſs, which would be unpardonable in a general at the head of an army,

when glory, and the public ſafety demanded ſo great a part of his attention. As different objects ought, upon common occaſions, to occupy the attention of men of different profeſſions, ſo different paſſions ought naturally to become habitual to them; and when we bring home to ourſelves their ſituation in this particular reſpect, we muſt be ſenſible, that every occurrence ſhould naturally affect them more or leſs, according as the emotion which it excites, coincides or diſagrees with the fixt habit and temper of their minds. We cannot expect the ſame ſenſibility to the gay pleaſures and amuſements of life in a clergyman which we lay our account with in an officer. The man whoſe peculiar occupation it is to keep the world in mind of that awful futurity which awaits them, who is to anounce what may be the fatal conſequences of every deviation from the rules of duty, and who is himſelf to ſet the example of the moſt exact conformity, is the meſſenger of tidings, which cannot, in propriety, be delivered either with levity or indifference. His mind is continually occupied with what is too grand and ſolemn, to leave any room for the impreſſions of thoſe frivolous objects, which fill up the attention of the diſſipated and the gay. We readily feel therefore, that, independent of cuſtom, there is a propriety in the manners which cuſtom has allotted to this profeſſion; and that nothing can be more ſuitable to the character of a clergyman, than that grave, that auſtere and abſtracted ſeverity, which we are

are habituated to expect in his behaviour. These reflections are so very obvious, that there is scarce any man so inconsiderate, as not, at some time, to have made them, and to have accounted to himself in this manner for his approbation of the usual character of this order.

The foundation of the customary character of some other professions is not so obvious, and our approbation of it is founded entirely in habit, without being either confirmed, or enlivened by any reflections of this kind. We are led by custom, for example, to annex the character of gaiety, levity, and sprightly freedom, as well as of some degree of dissipation, to the military profession: yet, if we were to consider what mood or tone of temper would be most suitable to this situation, we should be apt to determine, perhaps, that the most serious and thoughtful turn of mind, would best become those whose lives are continually exposed to uncommon danger; and who should therefore be more constantly occupied with the thoughts of death and its consequences than other men. It is this very circumstance, however, which is not improbably the occasion why the contrary turn of mind prevails so much among men of this profession. It requires so great an effort to conquer the fear of death, when we survey it with steadiness and attention, that those who are constantly exposed to it, find it easier to turn away their thoughts from it altogether, to warp themselves up in careless security and

indifference, and to plunge themſelves, for this purpoſe, into every ſort of amuſement and diſſipation. A camp is not the element of a thoughtful or a melancholy man: perſons of that caſt, indeed, are often abundantly determined, and are capable, by a great effort, of going on with inflexible reſolution to the moſt unavoidable death. But to be expoſed to continual, though leſs imminent danger, to be obliged to exert, for a long time, a degree of this effort, exhauſts and depreſſes the mind, and renders it incapable of all happineſs and enjoyment. The gay and careleſs, who have occaſion to make no effort at all, who fairly reſolve never to look before them, but to loſe in continual pleaſures and amuſements, all anxiety about their ſituation, more eaſily ſupport ſuch circumſtances. Whenever, by any peculiar circumſtances, an officer has no reaſon to lay his account with being expoſed to any uncommon danger, he is very apt to loſe the gaiety and diſſipated thoughtleſneſs of his character. The captain of a city guard is commonly as ſober, careful, and penurious an animal as the reſt of his fellow-citizens. A long peace is, for the ſame reaſon, very apt to diminiſh the difference between the civil and the military character. The ordinary ſituation, however, of men of this profeſſion, renders gaiety, and a degree of diſſipation, ſo much their uſual character; and cuſtom has, in our imagination, ſo ſtrongly connected this character with this ſtate of life, that we are

are very apt to despise any man, whose peculiar humour or situation, renders him incapable of acquiring it. We laugh at the grave and careful faces of a city guard, which so little resemble those of their profession. They themselves seem often to be ashamed of the regularity of their own manners, and, not to be out of the fashion of their trade, are fond of affecting that levity, which is by no means natural to them. Whatever is the deportment which we have been accustomed to see in a respectable order of men, it comes to be so associated in our imagination with that order, that whenever we see the one, we lay our account that we are to meet with the other, and when disappointed, miss something which we expected to find. We are embarassed, and put to a stand, and know not how to address ourselves to a character, which plainly affects to be of a different species from those with which we should have been disposed to class it.

The different situations of different ages and countries, are apt, in the same manner, to give different characters to the generality of those who live in them, and their sentiments concerning the particular degree of each quality, that is either blameable, or praise-worthy, vary according to that degree, which is usual in their own country, and in their own times. That degree of politeness, which would be highly esteemed, perhaps, would be thought effeminate adulation, in Russia, would be regarded as rudeness and

barbariſm at the court of France. That degree of order and frugality, which, in a Poliſh nobleman, would be conſidered as exceſſive parſimony, would be regarded as extravagance in a citizen of Amſterdam. Every age and country look upon that degree of each quality, which is commonly to be met with in thoſe who are eſteemed among themſelves, as the golden mean of that particular talent or virtue. And as this varies, according as their different circumſtances render different qualities more or leſs habitual to them, their ſentiments concerning the exact propriety of character and behaviour vary accordingly.

Among civilized nations, the virtues which are founded upon humanity, are more cultivated than thoſe which are founded upon ſelf-denial and the command of the paſſions. Among rude and barbarous nations, it is quite otherwiſe, the virtues of ſelf-denial are more cultivated than thoſe of humanity. The general ſecurity and happineſs which prevail in ages of civility and politeneſs afford little exerciſe to the contempt of danger, to patience in enduring labour, hunger, and pain. Poverty may eaſily be avoided, and the contempt of it, therefore, almoſt ceaſes to be a virtue. The abſtinence from pleaſure, becomes leſs neceſſary, and the mind is more at liberty to unbend itſelf, and to indulge its natural inclinations in all thoſe particular reſpects.

Among ſavages and barbarians it is quite otherwiſe. Every ſavage undergoes a ſort of Spartan diſcipline, and by the neceſſity of his

his ſituation is inured to every ſort of hardſhip. He is in continual danger: He is often expoſed to the greateſt extremities of hunger, and frequently dies of pure want. His circumſtances not only habituate him to every ſort of diſtreſs, but teach him to give way to none of the paſſions which that diſtreſs is apt to excite. He can expect from his countrymen no ſympathy or indulgence for ſuch weakneſs. Before we can feel much for others, we muſt in ſome meaſure be at eaſe ourſelves. If our own miſery pinches us very ſeverely, we have no leiſure to attend to that of our neighbour: And all ſavages are too much occupied with their own wants and neceſſities, to give ſuch attention to thoſe of another perſon. A ſavage, therefore, whatever be the nature of his diſtreſs, expects no ſympathy from thoſe about him, and diſdains, upon that account, to expoſe himſelf, by allowing the leaſt weakneſs to eſcape him. His paſſions, how furious and violent ſoever, are never permitted to diſturb the ſerenity of his countenance or the compoſure of his conduct and behaviour. The ſavages in North America, we are told, aſſume upon all occaſions the greateſt indifference, and would think themſelves degraded if they ſhould ever appear in any reſpect to be overcome, either by love or grief, or reſentment. Their magnanimity and ſelf-command, in this reſpect, are almoſt beyond the conception of Europeans. In a country in which all men are upon a level, with regard to rank and fortune, it might

might be expected that the mutual inclinations of the two parties ſhould be the only thing conſidered in marriages, and ſhould be indulged without any ſort of controul. This, however, is the country in which all marriages, without exception, are made up by the parents, and in which a young man would think himſelf diſgraced for ever, if he ſhewed the leaſt preference of one woman above another, or did not expreſs the moſt compleat indifference, both about the time when, and the perſon to whom he was to be married. The weakneſs of love, which is ſo much indulged in ages of humanity and politeneſs, is regarded among ſavages as the moſt unpardonable effeminacy. Even after the marriage the two parties ſeem to be aſhamed of a connection which is founded upon ſo ſordid a neceſſity. They do not live together. They ſee one another by ſtealth only. They both continue to dwell in the houſes of their reſpective fathers, and the open cohabitation of the two ſexes, which is permitted without blame in all other countries, is here conſidered as the moſt indecent and unmanly ſenſuality. Nor is it only over this agreeable paſſion that they exert this abſolute ſelf-command. They often bear in the ſight of all their countrymen with injuries, reproach, and the groſſeſt inſults with the appearance of the greateſt inſenſibility, and without expreſſing the ſmalleſt reſentment. When a ſavage is made priſoner of war, and receives, as is uſual, the ſentence of death from his conquerors,

querors, he hears it without expreſſing any emotion, and afterwards ſubmits to the moſt dreadful torments, without ever bemoaning himſelf, or diſcovering any other paſſion but contempt of his enemies. While he is hung by the ſhoulders over a ſlow fire, he derides his tormentors, and tells them with how much more ingenuity, he himſelf had tormented ſuch of their countrymen as had fallen into his hands. After he has been ſcorched and burnt, and lacerated in all the moſt tender and ſenſible parts of his body for ſeveral hours together, he is often allowed, in order to prolong his miſery, a ſhort reſpite, and is taken down from the ſtake: he employs this interval in talking upon all indifferent ſubjects, inquires after the news of the country, and ſeems indifferent about nothing but his own ſituation. The ſpectators expreſs the ſame inſenſibility; the ſight of ſo horrible an object ſeems to make no impreſſion upon them; they ſcarce look at the priſoner, except when they lend a hand to torment him. At other times they ſmoke tobacco, and amuſe themſelves with any common object, as if no ſuch matter was going on. Every ſavage is ſaid to prepare himſelf from his earlieſt youth for the dreadful end. He compoſes, for this purpoſe, what they call the ſong of death, a ſong which he is to ſing when he has fallen into the hands of his enemies, and is expiring under the tortures which they inflict upon him. It conſiſts of inſults upon his tormentors, and expreſſes the

the highest contempt of death and pain. He sings this song upon all extraordinary occasions, when he goes out to war, when he meets his enemies in the field, or whenever he has a mind to show that he has familiarised his imagination to the most dreadful misfortunes, and that no human event can daunt his resolution, or alter his purpose. The same contempt of death and torture prevails among all other savage nations. There is not a negro from the coast of Africa who does not, in this respect, possess a degree of magnanimity which the soul of his sordid master is scarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the jails of Europe, to wretches who possess the virtues neither of the countries which they come from, nor of those which they go to, and whose levity, brutality and baseness, so justly expose them to the contempt of the vanquished.

This heroic and unconquerable firmness, which the custom and education of his country demand of every savage, is not required of those who are brought up to live in civilized societies. If these last complain when they are in pain, if they grieve when they are in distress, if they allow themselves either to be overcome by love, or to be discomposed by anger, they are easily pardoned. Such weaknesses are not apprehended to affect the essential parts of their character. As long as they

they do not allow themſelves to be tranſported to do any thing contrary to juſtice or humanity, they loſe but little reputation, though the ſerenity of their countenance or the compoſure of their diſcourſe and behaviour ſhould be ſomewhat ruffled and diſturbed. A humane and poliſhed people, who have more ſenſibility to the paſſions of others, can more readily enter into an animated and paſſionate behaviour, and can more eaſily pardon ſome little exceſs. The perſon principally concerned is ſenſible of this; and being aſſured of the equity of his judges, indulges himſelf in ſtronger expreſſions of paſſion, and is leſs afraid of expoſing himſelf to their contempt by the violence of his emotions. We can venture to expreſs more emotion in the preſence of a friend than in that of a ſtranger, becauſe we expect more indulgence from the one than from the other. And in the ſame manner the rules of decorum among civilized nations, admit of a more animated behaviour, than is approved of among barbarians. The firſt converſe together with the openneſs of friends; the ſecond with the reſerve of ſtrangers. The emotion and vivacity with which the French and the Italians, the two moſt poliſhed nations upon the continent, expreſs themſelves on occaſions that are at all intereſting, ſurprize at firſt thoſe ſtrangers who happen to be travelling among them, and who, having been educated among a people of duller ſenſibility, cannot enter into this paſſionate behaviour, of which they have never

ver ſeen any example in their own country. A young French nobleman will weep in the preſence of the whole court upon being refuſed a regiment. An Italian, ſays the abbot of Dû Bos, expreſſes more emotion on being condemned in a fine of twenty ſhillings, than an Engliſhman on receiving the ſentence of death. Cicero, in the times of the higheſt Roman politeneſs, could, without degrading himſelf, weep with all the bitterneſs of ſorrow in the ſight of the whole ſenate and the whole people; as it is evident he muſt have done in the end of almoſt every oration. The orators of the earlier and ruder ages of Rome could not probably, conſiſtent with the manners of the times, have expreſſed themſelves with ſo much emotion. It would have been regarded, I ſuppoſe, as a violation of nature and propriety in the Scipio's, in the Lelius's, and in the elder Cato, to have expoſed ſo much tenderneſs to the view of the public. Thoſe antient warriors could expreſs themſelves, with order, gravity and good judgment, but are ſaid to have been ſtrangers to that ſublime and paſſionate eloquence which was firſt introduced into Rome, not many years before the birth of Cicero, by the two Gracchi, by Craſſus and by Sulpitius. This animated eloquence, which has been long practiſed, with or without ſucceſs, both in France and Italy, is but juſt beginning to be introduced into England. So wide is the difference between the degrees of ſelf-command which are required in civilized and in barbarous nations, and

and by ſuch different ſtandards do they judge of the propriety of behaviou .

This difference gives occaſion to many others that are not leſs eſſential. A poliſhed people being accuſtomed to give way, in ſome meaſure, to the movements of nature, become frank, open and ſincere. Barbarians, on the contrary, being obliged to ſmother and conceal the appearance of every paſſion, neceſſarily acquire the habits of falſhood and diſſimulation. It is obſerved by all thoſe who have been converſant with ſavage nations, whether in Aſia, Africa, or America, that they are all equally impenetrable, and that, when they have a mind to conceal the truth, no examination is capable of drawing it from them. They cannot be trepanned by the moſt artful queſtions. The torture itſelf is incapable of making them confeſs any thing which they have no mind to tell. The paſſions of a ſavage too, though they never expreſs themſelves by any outward emotion, but lye concealed in the breaſt of the ſufferer, are, notwithſtanding, all mounted to the higheſt pitch of fury. Though he ſeldom ſhows any ſymptoms of anger, yet his vengeance, when he comes to give way to it, is always ſanguinary and dreadful. The leaſt affront drives him to deſpair. His countenance and diſcourſe indeed are ſtill ſober and compoſed, and expreſs nothing but the moſt perfect tranquillity of mind : But his actions are often the moſt furious and violent. Among the North-Americans it is not uncommon

mon for persons of the tendereſt age and more fearful ſex to drown themſelves upon receiving only a ſlight reprimand from their mothers, and this too without expreſſing any paſſions or ſaying any thing, except, *you ſhall no longer have a daughter*. In civilized nations the paſſions of men are not commonly ſo furious or ſo deſperate. They are often clamorous and noiſy, but are ſeldom very hurtful; and ſeem frequently to aim at no other ſatisfaction, but that of convincing the ſpectator, that they are in the right to be ſo much moved, and of procuring his ſympathy and approbation.

All theſe effects of cuſtom and faſhion, however, upon the moral ſentiments of mankind, are inconſiderable in compariſon of thoſe which they give occaſion to in ſome other caſes; and it is not concerning the general ſtile of character and behaviour, that thoſe principles produce the greateſt perverſion of judgment, but concerning the propriety or impropriety of particular uſages.

The different manners which cuſtom teaches us to approve of in the different profeſſions and ſtates of life, do not concern things of the greateſt importance. We expect truth and juſtice from an old man as well as from a young, from a clergyman as well as from an officer; and it is in matters of ſmaller moment only that we look for the diſtinguiſhing marks of their reſpective characters. With regard to theſe too, there is often ſome unobſerved circumſtance which, if it was attended to, would ſhow us, that, independent of

of cuſtom, there was a propriety in the character which cuſtom had taught us to allot to each profeſſion. We cannot complain, therefore, in this caſe, that the perverſion of natural ſentiment is very great. Though the manners of different nations require different degrees of the ſame quality, in the character which they think worthy of eſteem, yet the worſt that can be ſaid to happen even here, is that the duties of one virtue are ſometimes extended ſo as to encroach a little upon the precincts of ſome other. The ruſtic hoſpitality that is in faſhion among the Poles encroaches, perhaps, a little upon oeconomy and good order; and the frugality that is eſteemed in Holland, upon generoſity and good-fellowſhip. The hardineſs demanded of ſavages diminiſhes their humanity; and, perhaps, the delicate ſenſibility required in civilized nations ſometimes deſtroys the maſculine firmneſs of the character. In general the ſtile of manners which takes place in any nation, may commonly upon the whole be ſaid to be that which is moſt ſuitable to its ſituation. Hardineſs is the character moſt ſuitable to the circumſtances of a ſavage; ſenſibility to thoſe of one who lives in a very civilized ſociety. Even here, therefore, we cannot complain that the moral ſentiments of men are very groſſly perverted.

It is not therefore in the general ſtile of conduct or behaviour that cuſtom authorizes the wideſt departure from what is the natural propriety of action. With regard to particu-

lar usages its influence is often much more destructive of good morals, and it is capable of establishing as lawful and blameless particular actions which shock the plainest principles of right and wrong.

Can there be greater barbarity, for example, than to hurt an infant? Its helplessness, its innocence, its amiableness, call forth the compassion, even of an enemy, and not to spare that tender age is regarded as the most furious effort of an enraged and cruel conqueror. What then should we imagine, must be the heart of a parent who could injure that weakness which even a furious enemy is afraid to violate? Yet the exposition, that is, the murder of new born infants, was a practice allowed of in almost all the states of Greece, even among the polite and civilized Athenians; and whenever the circumstances of the parent rendered it inconvenient to bring up the child, to abandon it to hunger, or to wild beasts, was regarded without blame or censure. This practice had probably begun in times of the most savage barbarity. The imaginations of men had been first made familiar with it in that earliest period of society, and the uniform continuance of the custom had hindered them afterwards from perceiving its enormity. We find, at this day, that this practice prevails among all savage nations; and in that rudest and lowest state of society it is undoubtedly more pardonable than in any other. The extreme indigence of a savage is often such that he himself is frequently exposed

posed to the greatest extremity of hunger, he often dies of pure want, and it is frequently impossible for him to support both himself and his child. We cannot wonder, therefore, that in this case he should abandon it. One who in flying from an enemy, whom it was impossible to resist, should throw down his infant, because it retarded his flight, would surely be excusable; since, by attempting to save it, he could only hope for the consolation of dying along with it. That in this state of society, therefore, a parent should be allowed to judge whether he can bring up his child, ought not to surprize us so greatly. In the latter ages of Greece, however, the same thing was permitted from views of remote interest or conveniency, which could by no means excuse it. Uninterrupted custom had by this time so thoroughly authorized the practice, that not only the loose maxims of the world tolerated this barbarous prerogative, but even the doctrine of philosophers, which ought to have been more just and accurate, was led away by the established custom, and upon this as upon many other occasions, instead of censuring, supported the horrible abuse, by far fetched considerations of public utility. Aristotle talks of it as of what the magistrate ought upon many occasions to encourage. The humane Plato is of the same opinion, and, with all that love of mankind which seems to animate all his writings, no where marks this practice with disapprobation. When custom can give sanc-

tion to ſo dreadful a violation of humanity, we may well imagine that there is ſcarce any particular practice ſo groſs which it cannot authorize. Such a thing, we hear men every day ſaying, is commonly done, and they ſeem to think this a ſufficient apology for what in itſelf is the moſt unjuſt and unreaſonable conduct.

There is an obvious reaſon why cuſtom ſhould never pervert our ſentiments with regard to the general ſtile and character of conduct and behaviour, in the ſame degree as with regard to the propriety or unlawfulneſs of particular uſages. There never can be any ſuch cuſtom. No ſociety could ſubſiſt a moment in which the uſual ſtrain of mens conduct and behaviour was of a piece with the horrible practice I juſt now mentioned.

PART

PART VI.

Of Systems of Moral Philosophy.

Consisting of four Sections.

SECTION I.

Of the questions which ought to be examined in a theory of moral sentiments.

IF we examine the most celebrated and remarkable of the different theories which have been given concerning the nature and origin of our moral sentiments, we shall find that almost all of them coincide with some part or other of that which I have been endeavouring to give an account of; and that if every thing which has already been said be fully considered, we shall be at no loss to explain what was the view or aspect of nature which led each particular author to form his particular system. From some one or other of those principles which I have been endeavouring to unfold, every system of morality that ever had any reputation in the world has, perhaps, ultimately been derived. As they are all of them, in this respect, founded upon natural principles, they are all of them in some measure in the right. But as many

of them are derived from a partial and imperfect view of nature, there are many of them too in ſome reſpects in the wrong.

In treating of the principles of morals there are two queſtions to be conſidered. Firſt, wherein does virtue conſiſt? Or what is the tone of temper, and tenor of conduct, which conſtitutes the excellent and praiſe-worthy character, the character which is the natural object of eſteem, honour and approbation? and ſecondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us? Or in other words, how and by what means does it come to paſs, that the mind prefers one tenor of conduct to another, denominates the one right and the other wrong; conſiders the one as the object of approbation, honour and reward, and the other of blame, cenſure and puniſhment?

We examine the firſt queſtion when we conſider whether virtue conſiſts in benevolence, as Dr. Hutchiſon imagines; or in acting ſuitably to the different relations we ſtand in, as Dr. Clark ſuppoſes; or in the wiſe and prudent purſuit of our own real and ſolid happineſs, as has been the opinion of others?

We examine the ſecond queſtion, when we conſider, whether the virtuous character, whatever it conſiſts in, be recommended to us by ſelf-love, which makes us perceive that this character, both in ourſelves and others, tends moſt to promote our own private intereſt; or by reaſon, which points out to us the dif-

difference between one character and another, in the ſame manner as it does that between truth and falſhood; or by a peculiar power of perception, called a moral ſenſe, which this virtuous character gratifies and pleaſes, as the contrary diſguſts and diſpleaſes it; or laſt of all, by ſome other principle in human nature, ſuch as a modification of ſympathy, or the like.

I ſhall begin with conſidering the ſyſtems which have been formed concerning the firſt of theſe queſtions, and ſhall proceed afterwards to examine thoſe concerning the ſecond.

SECTION II.

Of the different accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue.

INTRODUCTION.

THE different accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue, or of the temper of mind which conſtitutes the excellent and praiſe-worthy character, may be reduced to three different claſſes. According to ſome, the virtuous temper of mind does not conſiſt in any one ſpecies of affections, but in the proper government and direction of all our affections, which may be either virtuous or vitious according to the objects which they purſue, and the degree of vehemence with which they purſue them. According to theſe authors, therefore, virtue conſiſts in propriety.

According to others, virtue conſiſts in the judicious purſuit of our own private intereſt and happineſs, or in the proper government and direction of thoſe ſelfiſh affections which aim ſolely at this end. In the opinion of theſe authors, therefore virtue conſiſts in prudence.

Another ſet of authors make virtue conſiſt in thoſe affections only which aim at the happineſs of others, not in thoſe which aim at our own. According to them, therefore, dis-

interested benevolence is the only motive which can stamp upon any action the character of virtue.

The character of virtue, it is evident, must either be ascribed indifferently to all our affections, when under proper government and direction; or it must be confined to some one class or division of them. The great division of our affections is into the selfish and the benevolent. If the character of virtue, therefore, cannot be ascribed indifferently to all our affections, when under proper government and direction, it must be confined either to those which aim directly at our own private happiness, or to those which aim directly at that of others. If virtue, therefore, does not consist in propriety, it must consist either in prudence or in benevolence. Besides these three, it is scarce possible to imagine that any other account can be given of the nature of virtue. I shall endeavour to show hereafter how all the other accounts, which are seemingly different from any of these, coincide at bottom with some one or other of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of those systems which make virtue consist in propriety.

ACCORDING to Plato, to Aristotle and to Zeno, virtue consists in the propriety of conduct, or in the suitableness of the affection from which we act to the object which excites it.

I. In the system of Plato * the soul is considered as something like a little state or republic, composed of three different faculties or orders.

The first is the judging faculty, the faculty which determines not only what are the proper means for attaining any end, but also what ends are fit to be pursued, and what degree of relative value we ought to put upon each. This faculty Plato called, as it is very properly called, reason, and considered it as what had a right to be the governing principle of the whole. Under this appellation, it is evident, he comprehended not only that faculty by which we judge of truth and falshood, but that by which we judge of the propriety or impropriety of desires and affections.

The different passions and appetites, the natural subject of this ruling principle, but

* See Plato de rep. lib. 4.

which

which are so apt to rebel against their master, he reduced to two different classes or orders. The first consisted of those passions, which are founded in pride and resentment, or in what the schoolmen called the irascible part of the soul; ambition, animosity, the love of honour and the dread of shame, the desire of victory, superiority and revenge; all those passions, in short, which are supposed either to arise from, or to denote what by a metaphor in our language we commonly call spirit or natural fire. The second consisted of those passions which are founded in the love of pleasure, or in what the schoolmen called the concupiscible part of the soul. It comprehended all the appetites of the body, the love of ease and security, and of all sensual gratifications.

It rarely happens that we break in upon that plan of conduct, which the governing principle prescribes, and which in all our cool hours we had laid down to ourselves as what was most proper for us to pursue, but when prompted by one or other of those two different sets of passions; either by ungovernable ambition and resentment, or by the importunate sollicitations of present ease and pleasure. But though these two orders of passions are so apt to mislead us, they are still considered as necessary parts of human nature: the first having been given to defend us against injuries, to assert our rank and dignity in the world, to make us aim at what

is

is noble and honourable, and to make us diſtinguiſh thoſe who act in the ſame manner; the ſecond to provide for the ſupport and neceſſities of the body.

In the ſtrength, acuteneſs and perfection of the governing principle was placed the eſſential virtue of prudence, which, according to Plato, conſiſted in a juſt and clear diſcernment, founded upon general and ſcientific ideas of the ends which were proper to be purſued, and of the means which were proper for attaining them.

When the firſt ſet of paſſions, thoſe of the iraſcible part of the ſoul, had that degree of ſtrength and firmneſs, which enabled them, under the direction of reaſon, to deſpiſe all dangers in the purſuit of what was honourable and noble; it conſtituted the virtue of fortitude and magnanimity. This order of paſſions, according to this ſyſtem, was of a more generous and noble nature than the other. They were conſidered upon many occaſions as the auxiliaries of reaſon, to check and reſtrain the inferior and brutal appetites. We are often angry at ourſelves, it was obſerved, we often become the objects of our own reſentment and indignation, when the love of pleaſure prompts us to do what we diſapprove of; and the iraſcible part of our nature is in this manner called in to aſſiſt the rational againſt the concupiſcible.

When all thoſe three different parts of our nature were in perfect concord with one another, when neither the iraſcible nor concupiſcible

ſcible paſſions ever aimed at any gratification which reaſon did not approve of, and when reaſon never commanded any thing, but what theſe of their own accord were willing to perform: this happy compoſure, this perfect and compleat harmony of ſoul, conſtituted that virtue which in their language is expreſſed by a word which we commonly tranſlate temperance, but which might more properly be tranſlated good temper, or ſobriety and moderation of mind.

Juſtice, the laſt and greateſt of the four cardinal virtues, took place, according to this ſyſtem, when each of thoſe three faculties of the mind confined itſelf to its proper office, without attempting to encroach upon that of any other; when reaſon directed and paſſion obeyed, and when each paſſion performed its proper duty, and exerted itſelf towards its proper object eaſily and without reluctance, and with that degree of force and energy, which was ſuitable to the value of what it purſued. In this conſiſted that compleat virtue, that perfect propriety of conduct, which Plato, after ſome of the antient Pythagoreans, denominated Juſtice.

The word, it is to be obſerved, which expreſſes juſtice in the Greek language has ſeveral different meanings; and as the correſpondent word in all other languages, ſo far as I know, has the ſame, there muſt be ſome natural affinity among thoſe various ſignifications. In one ſenſe we are ſaid to do juſtice to our neighbour when we abſtain from doing him any

any positive harm, and do not directly hurt him, either in his person, or in his estate, or in his reputation. This is that justice which I have treated of above, the observance of which may be extorted by force, and the violation of which exposes to punishment. In another sense we are said not to do justice to our neighbour unless we conceive for him all that love, respect and esteem, which his character, his situation, and his connection with ourselves, render suitable and proper for us to feel, and unless we act accordingly. It is in this sense that we are said to do injustice to a man of merit who is connected with us, tho' we abstain from hurting him in every respect, if we do not exert ourselves to serve him and to place him in that situation in which the impartial spectator would be pleased to see him. The first sense of the word coincides with what Aristotle and the Schoolmen call commutative justice, and with what Grotius calls the *justitia expletrix*, which consists in abstaining from what is anothers, and in doing voluntarily whatever we can with propriety be forced to do. The second sense of the word coincides with what some have called distributive justice *, and with the *justitia attributrix* of Grotius, which consists in proper beneficence, in the becoming use of what is our own, and in the applying it to those purposes

* The distributive justice of Aristotle is somewhat different. It consists in the proper distribution of rewards from the public stock of a community. See Aristotle Ethic. Nic. l. 5. c. 2.

either of charity or generosity, to which it is most suitable, in our situation, that it should be applied. In this sense justice comprehends all the social virtues. There is yet another sense in which the word justice is sometimes taken, still more extensive than either of the former, though very much a-kin to the last; and which runs too, so far as I know, through all languages. It is in this last sense that we are said to be unjust, when we do not seem to value any particular object with that degree of esteem, or to pursue it with that degree of ardour which to the impartial spectator it may appear to deserve or to be naturally fitted for exciting. Thus we are said to do injustice to a poem or a picture, when we do not admire them enough, and we are said to do them more than justice when we admire them too much. In the same manner we are said to do injustice to ourselves when we appear not to give sufficient attention to any particular object of self-interest. In this last sense, what is called justice means the same thing with exact and perfect propriety of conduct and behaviour, and comprehends in it, not only the offices of both commutative and distributive justice, but of every other virtue, of prudence, of fortitude, of temperance. It is in this last sense that Plato evidently understands what he calls justice, and which, therefore, according to him, comprehends in it the perfection of every sort of virtue.

Such

Such is the account given by Plato of the nature of virtue, or of that temper of mind which is the proper object of praise and approbation. It consists, according to him, in that state of mind in which every faculty confines itself within its proper sphere without encroaching upon that of any other, and performs its proper office with that precise degree of strength and vigour which belongs to it. His account, it is evident, coincides in every respect with what we have said above concerning the propriety of conduct.

II. Virtue, * according to Aristotle, consists in the habit of mediocrity according to right reason. Every particular virtue, according to him, lies in a kind of middle between two opposite vices, of which the one offends from being too much, the other from being too little affected by a particular species of objects. Thus the virtue of fortitude or courage lies in the middle between the opposite vices of cowardice and of presumptuous rashness, of which the one offends from being too much, and the other from being too little affected by the objects of fear. Thus too the virtue of frugality lies in a middle between avarice and profusion, of which the one consists in an excess, the other in a defect of the proper attention to the objects of self-interest. Magnanimity, in the same manner, lies in a middle between the excess of arrogance and the de-

* See Aristotle Ethic. Nic. l. 2. c. 5. et seq. et l. 3. c. 5. et seq.

fect

fect of pusillanimity, of which the one consists in too extravagant, the other in too weak a sentiment of our own worth and dignity. It is unnecessary to observe that this account of virtue corresponds too pretty exactly with what has been said above concerning the propriety and impropriety of conduct.

According to Aristotle *, indeed, virtue did not so much consist in those moderate and right affections, as in the habit of this moderation. In order to understand this, it is to be observed, that virtue may be considered either as the quality of an action, or as the quality of a person. Considered as the quality of an action, it consists, even according to Aristotle, in the reasonable moderation of the affection from which the action proceeds, whether this disposition be habitual to the person or not. Considered as the quality of a person, it consists in the habit of this reasonable moderation, in its having become the customary and usual disposition of the mind. Thus the action which proceeds from an occasional fit of generosity is undoubtedly a generous action, but the man who performs it, is not necessarily a generous person, because it may be the single action of the kind which he ever performed. The motive and disposition of heart, from which this action was performed, may have been quite just and proper: but as this happy mood seems to have been the effect rather of accidental humour than of any thing steady or permanent in the character, it can

* See Aristotle Ethic. Nic. lib. ii. ch. 1. 2. 3. and 4.

reflect no great honour on the performer. When we denominate a character generous, or charitable, or virtuous in any respect, we mean to signify that the disposition expressed by each of those appellations is the usual and customary disposition of the person. But single actions of any kind, how proper and suitable soever, are of little consequence to show that this is the case. If a single action was sufficient to stamp the character of any virtue upon the person who performed it, the most worthless of mankind might lay claim to all the virtues; since there is no man who has not, upon some occasions, acted with prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. But though single actions, how laudable soever, reflect very little praise upon the person who performs them, a single vitious action performed by one whose conduct is usually very regular, greatly diminishes and sometimes destroys altogether our opinion of his virtue. A single action of this kind sufficiently shows that his habits are not perfect, and that he is less to be depended upon, than, from the usual train of his behaviour, we might have been apt to imagine.

Aristotle too *, when he made virtue to consist in practical habits, had it probably in his view to oppose the doctrine of Plato, who seems to have been of opinion that just sentiments and reasonable judgments concerning what was fit to be done or to be avoided, were alone sufficient to constitute the most

* See Aristotle Mag. Mor. lib. i. ch. 1.

perfect

perfect virtue. Virtue, according to Plato, might be considered as a species of science, and no man, he thought, could see clearly and demonstratively what was right and what was wrong, and not act accordingly. Passion might make us act contrary to doubtful and uncertain opinions, not to plain and evident judgments. Aristotle, on the contrary, was of opinion, that no conviction of the understanding was capable of getting the better of inveterate habits, and the good morals arose not from knowledge but from action.

III. According to Zeno †, the founder of the Stoical doctrine, every animal was by nature recommended to its own care, and was indowed with the principle of self-love, that it might endeavour to preserve, not only its existence, but all the different parts of its nature, in the best and most perfect state of which they were capable.

The self-love of man embraced, if I may say so, his body and all its different members, his mind and all its different faculties and powers, and desired the preservation and maintenance of them all in their best and most perfect condition. Whatever tended to support this state of existence was, therefore, by nature pointed out to him as fit to be chosen; and whatever tended to destroy it, as fit to be rejected. Thus health, strength, agility and ease of body, as well as the external conveniencies which could promote these, wealth,

† See Cicero de finibus, lib. iii. also Diogenes Laertius in Zenone, lib. vii. segment 84.

power, honours, the respect and esteem of those we live with, were naturally pointed out to us as things eligible, and of which the possession was preferable to the contrary. On the other hand, sickness, infirmity, unwieldiness, pain of body, as well as all the external inconveniencies which tended to occasion or bring on any of them, poverty, the want of authority, the contempt or hatred of those we live with; were in the same manner, pointed out to us as things to be shunned and avoided. In each of those two different classes of objects there were some which appeared to be more the objects either of choice or rejection than others in the same class. Thus in the first class health appeared evidently preferable to strength, and strength to agility; reputation to power, and power to riches. And thus too, in the second class, sickness was more to be avoided than unweildiness of body, ignominy than poverty, and poverty than the want of authority. Virtue and the propriety of conduct consisted in choosing and rejecting all different objects and circumstances according as they were by nature rendered more or less the objects of choice or rejection; in selecting always from among the several objects of choice presented to us, that which was most to be chosen, when we could not obtain them all: and in selecting too out of the several objects of rejection offered to us, that which was least to be avoided, when it was not in our power to avoid them all. By choosing and rejecting with this just and accurate discernment, by thus

thus bestowing upon every object the precise degree of attention it deserved, according to the place which it held in this natural scale of things, we maintained, according to the Stoics, that perfect rectitude of conduct which constituted the essence of virtue. This was what they called to live consistently, to live according to nature, and to obey those laws and directions which nature, or the author of nature, had prescribed for our conduct.

So far the Stoical idea of propriety and virtue is not very different from that of Aristotle and the antient peripatetics. What chiefly distinguished those two systems from one another was the different degrees of self-command which they required. The peripatetics allowed of some degree of perturbation as suitable to the weakness of human nature, and as useful to so imperfect a creature as man. If his own misfortunes excited no passionate grief, if his own injuries called forth no lively resentment, reason, or a regard to the general rules which determined what was right and fit to be done, would commonly, they thought, be too weak to prompt him to avoid the one or to beat off the other. The Stoics, on the contrary, demanded the most perfect apathy, and regarded every emotion which could in the smallest degree disturb the tranquility of the mind, as the effect of levity and folly. The Peripatetics seem to have thought that no passion exceeded the bounds of propriety as long as the spectator, by the utmost effort of humanity, could sympathize with it. The

Stoics, on the contrary, appear to have regarded every passion as improper, which made any demand upon the sympathy of the spectator, or required him to alter in any respect the natural and ordinary state of his mind, in order to keep time with the vehemence of its emotions. A man of virtue, they seem to have thought, ought not to depend upon the generosity of those he lives with for pardon or approbation.

According to the Stoics, every event should, to a wise man, appear indifferent, and what for its own sake could be the object neither of desire, nor aversion, neither of joy, nor sorrow. If he preferred some events to others, if some situations were the objects of his choice, and others of his rejection *, it was not, because he regarded the one as, in themselves, in any respect better than the other, or thought that his own happiness would be more compleat in, what is called, the fortunate, than in what is commonly regarded as the distressful situation; but because the propriety of action, the rule which the gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required him to choose and reject in this manner. Among the primary objects of natural inclination, or among those things which nature had originally recommended to us as eligible, was the prosperity of our family, of our relations, of our friends, of our country, of mankind, and of

* Some of these expressions sound a little aukward in the English language: they are literal translations of technical terms of the Stoics.

the universe in general. Nature too had taught us that as the prosperity of two was preferable to that of one, that of many or of all must be infinitely more so. That we ourselves were but one, and that consequently wherever our prosperity was inconsistent with that, either of the whole, or of any considerable part of the whole, it ought, even in our own choice, to yield to what was so vastly preferable. As all the events in this world were conducted by the providence of a wise, powerful and good God, we might be assured that whatever happened, tended to the prosperity and perfection of the whole. If we ourselves, therefore, were in poverty, in sickness, or in any other calamity, we ought, first of all, to use our utmost endeavours, so far as justice and our duty to others would allow, to rescue ourselves from this disagreeable circumstance. But if after all we could do, we found this impossible, we ought to rest satisfied that the order and perfection of the universe required that we should in the mean time continue in this situation. And as the prosperity of the whole should, even to us, appear preferable to so insignificant a part as ourselves, our situation, whatever it was, ought from that moment to become the object of our choice, and even of our desire, if we would maintain that compleat propriety and rectitude of sentiment and conduct in which the perfection of our nature consists. If, indeed, any opportunity of extricating ourselves should offer, it became our duty to embrace it. The

order of the universe, it was evident, no longer required our continuance in this situation, and the great director of the world plainly called upon us to leave it, by so clearly pointing out the road which we were to follow. It was the same case with the adversity of our relations, our friends, our country. If without violating any more sacred obligation, it was in our power to prevent or to put an end to their calamity, it undoubtedly was our duty to do so. The propriety of action, the rule which Jupiter had given us for the direction of our conduct, evidently required this of us. But if it was altogether out of our power to do either, we ought then to consider this event as the most fortunate which could possibly have happened; Because we might be assured that it tended most to the prosperity and order of the whole; which was what we ourselves, if we were wise and equitable, ought most of all to desire. "In what sense, says "Epictetus, are some things said to be ac-"cording to our nature, and others contrary "to it? It is in that sense in which we consider "ourselves as separated and detached from all "other things. For thus it may be said to "be according to the nature of the foot to be "always clean. But if you consider it as a "foot, and not as something detached from "the rest of the body, it must behove it "sometimes to trample in the dirt, and some-"times to tread upon thorns, and sometimes "too to be cut off for the sake of the whole "body; and if it refuses this, it is no longer

a foot.

"a foot. Thus too ought we to conceive "with regard to ourselves. What are you? "A man. If you consider yourself as some-"thing separated and detached, it is agree-"able to your nature to live to old age, to "be rich, to be in health. But if you con-"sider yourself as a man, and as a part of a "whole, upon account of that whole it will "behoove you sometimes to be in sickness, "sometimes to be exposed to the inconve-"niency of a sea voyage, sometimes to be in "want; and at last, perhaps, to die before "your time. Why then do you complain? "Don't you know that by doing so, as the "foot ceases to be a foot, so you cease to be a "man *."

This submission to the order of the universe, this entire indifference with regard to whatever concerns ourselves, when put into the balance with the interest of the whole, could derive its propriety, it is evident, from no other principle besides that upon which I have endeavoured to show that the propriety of justice was founded. As long as we view our own interests with our own eyes, it is scarce possible that we should willingly acquiesce in their being thus sacrificed to the interests of the whole. It is only when we view those opposite interests with the eyes of others that what concerns ourselves can appear to be so contemptible in the comparison, as

* Arrian. lib. iii. c. 5.

to

to be resigned without any reluctance. To every body but the person principally concerned nothing can appear more agreeable to reason and propriety than that the part should give place to the whole. But what is agreeable to the reason of all other men, ought not to appear contrary to his. He himself therefore ought to approve of this sacrifice, and acknowledge its conformity to reason. But all the affections of a wise man, according to the stoics, are perfectly agreeable to reason and propriety, and of their own accord coincide with whatever these ruling principles prescribe. A wise man, therefore, could never feel any reluctance to comply with this disposition of things.

IV. Besides these antient, there are some modern systems, according to which virtue consists in propriety; or in the suitableness of the affection from which we act to the cause or object which excites it. The system of Dr. Clark, which places virtue in acting according to the relations of things, in regulating our conduct according to the fitness or incongruity which there may be in the application of certain actions to certain things, or to certain relations: That of Mr. Woollaston, which places it in acting according to the truth of things, according to their proper nature and essence, or in treating them as what they really are, and not as what they are not: that of my lord Shaftesbury, which places it in maintaining a proper balance of the affections,

and

and in allowing no paſſion to go beyond its proper ſphere: are all of them more or leſs inaccurate deſcriptions of the ſame fundamental idea.

The deſcription of virtue which is either given, or at leaſt meant and intended to be given in each of thoſe ſyſtems, for ſome of the modern authors are not very fortunate in their manner of expreſſing themſelves, is no doubt quite juſt, ſo far as it goes. There is no virtue without propriety, and wherever there is propriety, ſome degree of approbation is due. But ſtill this deſcription is imperfect. For though propriety is an eſſential ingredient in every virtuous action, it is not always the ſole ingredient. Beneficent actions have in them another quality by which they appear not only to deſerve approbation but recompence. None of thoſe ſyſtems account either eaſily or ſufficiently for that ſuperior degree of eſteem which ſeems due to ſuch actions, or for that diverſity of ſentiment which they naturally excite. Neither is the deſcription of vice more compleat. For in the ſame manner, though impropriety is a neceſſary ingredient in every vitious action, it is not always the ſole ingredient, and there is often the higheſt degree of abſurdity and impropriety in very harmleſs and inſignificant actions. Deliberate actions, of a pernicious tendency to thoſe we live with, have, beſides their impropriety, a peculiar quality of their own by which they appear to deſerve, not only diſapprobation, but

but punishment; and to be the objects, not of dislike merely, but of resentment and revenge: and none of those systems easily and sufficiently account for that superior degree of detestation which we feel for such actions.

CHAP. II.

Of those systems which make virtue consist in prudence.

THE most antient of those systems which make virtue consist in prudence, and of which any considerable remains have come down to us, is that of Epicurus, who is said, however, to have borrowed all the leading principles of his philosophy from some of those who had gone before him, particularly from Aristippus; though it is very probable, notwithstanding this allegation of his enemies, that at least his manner of applying those principles was altogether his own.

According to Epicurus * bodily pleasure and pain were the sole ultimate object of natural desire and aversion. That they were always the natural objects of those passions, he thought required no proof. Pleasure might, indeed, appear sometimes to be avoided; not, however, because it was pleasure, but because, by the enjoyment of it, we should

* See Cicero de finibus, lib. i. Diogenes Laert. l. x.

either

either forfeit ſome greater pleaſure, or expoſe ourſelves to ſome pain that was more to be avoided than this pleaſure was to be deſired. Pain, in the ſame manner, might appear ſometimes to be eligible; not, however, becauſe it was pain, but becauſe by enduring it we might either avoid a ſtill greater pain, or acquire ſome pleaſure of much more importance. That bodily pain and pleaſure, therefore, were always the natural objects of deſire and averſion, was, he thought, abundantly evident. Nor was it leſs ſo, he imagined, that they were the ſole ultimate objects of thoſe paſſions. Whatever elſe was either deſired or avoided was ſo, according to him, upon account of its tendency to produce one or other of thoſe ſenſations. The tendency to procure pleaſure rendered power and riches deſireable, as the contrary tendency to produce pain made poverty and inſignificancy the objects of averſion. Honour and reputation were valued, becauſe the eſteem and love of thoſe we live with were of the greateſt conſequence both to procure pleaſure and to defend us from pain. Ignominy and bad fame, on the contrary, were to be avoided, becauſe the hatred, contempt and reſentment of thoſe we lived with deſtroyed all ſecurity, and neceſſarily expoſe us to the greateſt bodily evils.

All the pleaſures and pains of the mind were, according to Epicurus, ultimately derived from thoſe of the body. The mind

was

was happy when it thought of the past pleasures of the body, and hoped for others to come: and it was miserable when it thought of the pains which the body had formerly endured, and dreaded the same or greater thereafter.

But the pleasures and pains of the mind, though ultimately derived from those of the body, were vastly greater than their originals. The body felt only the sensation of the present instant, whereas the mind felt also the past and the future, the one by remembrance, the other by anticipation, and consequently both suffered and enjoyed much more. When we are under the greatest bodily pain, he observed, we shall always find, if we attend to it, that it is not the suffering of the present instant which chiefly torments us, but either the agonizing remembrance of the past, or the yet more horrible dread of the future. The pain of each instant, considered by itself, and cut off from all that goes before and all that comes after it, is a trifle, not worth the regarding. Yet this is all which the body can ever be said to suffer. In the same manner, when we enjoy the greatest pleasure, we shall always find that the bodily sensation, the sensation of the present instant makes but a small part of our happiness, that our enjoyment chiefly arises either from the chearful recollection of the past, or the still more joyous anticipation of the future, and that the mind always contributes by

by much the largeſt ſhare of the entertainment.

Since our happineſs and miſery, therefore, depended chiefly on the mind, if this part of our nature was well diſpoſed, if our thoughts and opinions were as they ſhould be, it was of little importance in what manner our body was affected. Though under great bodily pain, we might ſtill enjoy a conſiderable ſhare of happineſs, if our reaſon and judgment maintained their ſuperiority. We might entertain ourſelves with the remembrance of paſt, and with the hopes of future pleaſure; we might ſoften the rigour of our pains, by recollecting what it was which, even in this ſituation, we were under any neceſſity of ſuffering. That this was merely the bodily ſenſation, the pain of the preſent inſtant, which by itſelf could never be very great. That whatever agony we ſuffered from the dread of its continuance was the effect of an opinion of the mind, which might be corrected by juſter ſentiments; by conſidering that, if our pains were violent, they would probably be of ſhort duration; and that if they were of long continuance, they would probably be moderate, and admit of many intervals of eaſe; and that, at any rate, death was always at hand and within call to deliver us, which as, according to him, it put an end to all ſenſation, either of pain or pleaſure, could not be regarded as an evil. When we are, ſaid he, death

death is not; and when death is, we are not; death therefore can be nothing to us.

If the actual ſenſation of poſitive pain was in itſelf ſo little to be feared, that of pleaſure was ſtill leſs to be deſired. Naturally the ſenſation of pleaſure was much leſs pungent than that of pain. If, therefore, this laſt could take ſo very little from the happineſs of a well-diſpoſed mind, the other could add ſcarce any thing to it. When the body was free from pain and the mind from fear and anxiety, the ſuperadded ſenſation of bodily pleaſure could be of very little importance; and though it might diverſify, could not properly be ſaid to increaſe the happineſs of this ſituation.

In eaſe of body, therefore, and in ſecurity or tranquility of mind, conſiſted, according to Epicurus, the moſt perfect ſtate of human nature, the moſt compleat happineſs which man was capable of enjoying. To obtain this great end of natural deſire was the ſole object of all the virtues, which, according to him, were not deſireable upon their own account, but upon account of their tendency to bring about this ſituation.

Prudence, for example, though, according to this philoſophy, the ſource and principle of all the virtues, was not deſirable upon its own account. That careful and laborious and circumſpect ſtate of mind, ever watchful and ever attentive to the moſt diſtant conſequences of every action, could not be a thing pleaſant

pleasant or agreeable for its own sake, but upon account of its tendency to procure the greatest goods and to keep off the greatest evils.

To abstain from pleasure too, to curb and restrain our natural passions for enjoyment, which was the office of temperance, could never be desireable for its own sake. The whole value of this virtue arose from its utility, from its enabling us to postpone the present enjoyment for the sake of a greater to come, or to avoid a greater pain that might ensue from it. Temperance, in short, was nothing but prudence with regard to pleasure.

To support labour, to endure pain, to be exposed to danger or to death, the situations which fortitude would often lead us into, were surely still less the objects of natural desire. They were chosen only to avoid greater evils. We submitted to labour, in order to avoid the greater shame and pain of poverty, and we exposed ourselves to danger and to death in defence of our liberty and property, the means and instruments of pleasure and happiness; or in defence of our country, in the safety of which our own was necessarily comprehended. Fortitude enabled us to do all this chearfully, as the best which, in our present situation, could possibly be done, and was in reality no more than prudence, good judgment and presence of mind in properly appreciating pain, labour and danger, always chusing the less in order to avoid the greater.

It is the same case with justice. To abstain from what is another's was not desireable on its own account, and it could not surely

be better for you, that I ſhould poſſeſs what is my own, than that you ſhould poſſeſs it. You ought, however, to abſtain from whatever belongs to me, becauſe by doing otherwiſe you will provoke the reſentment and indignation of mankind. The ſecurity and tranquility of your mind will be entirely deſtroyed. You will be filled with fear and conſternation at the thought of that puniſhment which you will imagine that men are at all times ready to inflict upon you, and from which no power, no art, no concealment, will ever in your own fancy be ſufficient to protect you. That other ſpecies of juſtice which conſiſts in doing proper good offices to different perſons, according to the various relations of neighbours, kinſmen, friends, benefactors, ſuperiors or equals, which they may ſtand in to us, is recommended by the ſame reaſons. To act properly in all theſe different relations procures us the eſteem and love of thoſe we live with; as to do otherwiſe excites their contempt and hatred. By the one we naturally ſecure, by the other we neceſſarily endanger our own eaſe and tranquility, the great and ultimate objects of all our deſires. The whole virtue of juſtice, therefore, the moſt important of all the virtues, is no more than diſcreet and prudent conduct with regard to our neighbours.

Such is the doctrine of Epicurus concerning the nature of virtue. It may ſeem extraordinary that this philoſopher, who is deſcribed as a perſon of the moſt amiable man-

ners,

ners, ſhould never have obſerved, that, whatever may be the tendency of thoſe virtues, or of the contrary vices, with regard to our bodily eaſe and ſecurity, the ſentiments which they naturally excite in others are the objects of a much more paſſionate deſire or averſion than all their other conſequences; That to be amiable, to be reſpectable, to be the proper object of eſteem, is by every well-diſpoſed mind more valued than all the eaſe and ſecurity which love, reſpect and eſteem can procure us; That, on the contrary, to be odious, to be contemptible, to be the proper object of indignation, is more dreaded than all that we can ſuffer in our body from hatred, contempt or indignation; and that conſequently our deſire of the one character, and our averſion to the other, cannot ariſe from any regard to the effects which either of them is likely to produce upon the body.

This ſyſtem is, no doubt, altogether inconſiſtent with that which I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh. It is not difficult, however, to diſcover from what phaſis, if I may ſay ſo, from what particular view or aſpect of nature, this account of things derives its probability. By the wiſe contrivance of the author of nature, virtue is upon all ordinary occaſions, even with regard to this life, real wiſdom, and the ſureſt and readieſt means of obtaining both ſafety and advantage. Our ſucceſs or diſappointment in our undertakings muſt very much depend upon the good or bad opinion which is commonly entertained

of us, and upon the general disposition of those we live with, either to assist or to oppose us. But the best, the surest, the easiest and the readiest way of obtaining the advantageous and of avoiding the unfavourable judgments of others, is undoubtedly to render ourselves the proper objects of the former and not of the latter, "Do you desire, said Socrates, "the reputation of a good musician? The "only sure way of obtaining it, is to become "a good musician. Would you desire in the "same manner to be thought capable of serv-"ing your country either as a general or as "a statesman? The best way in this case too "is really to acquire the art and experience "of war and government, and to become "really fit to be a general or a statesman. "And in the same manner if you would be "reckoned sober, temperate, just, and equi-"table, the best way of acquiring this repu-"tation is to become sober, temperate, just, "and equitable. If you can really render your-"self amiable, respectable, and the proper ob-"ject of esteem, there is no fear of your not "soon acquiring the love, the respect, and "esteem of those you live with." Since the practice of virtue, therefore, is in general so advantageous, and that of vice so contrary to our interest, the consideration of those opposite tendencies undoubtedly stamps an additional beauty and propriety upon the one, and a new deformity and impropriety upon the other. Temperance, magnanimity, justice and beneficence, come thus to be approved

proved of, not only under their proper characters, but under the additional character of the highest wisdom and most real prudence. And in the same manner the contrary vices of intemperance, pusilanimity, injustice, and either malevolence or sordid selfishness, come to be disapproved of, not only under their proper characters, but under the additional character of the most short-sighted folly and weakness. Epicurus appears in every virtue to have attended to this species of propriety only. It is that which is most apt to occur to those who are endeavouring to persuade others to regularity of conduct. When men by their practice, and perhaps too by their maxims, manifestly show that the natural beauty of virtue is not likely to have much effect upon them, how is it possible to move them but by representing the folly of their conduct, and how much they themselves are in the end likely to suffer by it?

By running up all the different virtues too to this one species of propriety, Epicurus indulged a propensity, which is natural to all men, but which philosophers in particular are apt to cultivate with a peculiar fondness, as the great means of displaying their ingenuity, the propensity to account for all appearances from as few principles as possible. And he, no doubt, indulged this propensity still further, when he referred all the primary objects of natural desire and aversion to the pleasures and pains of the body. The great patron of the atomical philosophy, who

took so much pleasure in deducing all the powers and qualities of bodies from the most obvious and familiar, the figure, motion and arrangement of the small parts of matter, felt no doubt a similar satisfaction, when he accounted, in the same manner, for all the sentiments and passions of the mind from those which are most obvious and familiar.

The system of Epicurus agreed with those of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno, in making virtue consist in acting in the most suitable manner to obtain the * primary objects of natural desire. It differed from all of them in two other respects; first, in the account which it gave of those primary objects of natural desire; and secondly, in the account which it gave of the excellence of virtue, or of the reason why that quality ought to be esteemed.

The primary objects of natural desire consisted, according to Epicurus, in bodily pleasure and pain, and in nothing else: whereas, according to the other three philosophers, there were many other objects, such as knowledge, such as the happiness of our relations, of our friends, of our country, which were ultimately desireable for their own sake.

Virtue too, according to Epicurus, did not deserve to be pursued for its own sake, nor was itself one of the ultimate objects of natural appetite, but was eligible only upon account of its tendency to prevent pain and to procure ease and pleasure. In the opinion of

* Prima naturæ.

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the other three, on the contrary, it was desireable, not meerly as the means of procuring the other primary objects of natural desire, but as something which was in itself more valuable than them all. Man, they thought, being born for action, his happiness must consist, not meerly in the agreeableness of his passive sensations, but also in the propriety of his active exertions.

CHAP. II.

Of those systems which make virtue consist in benevolence.

THE system which makes virtue consist in benevolence, though I think not so antient as all of those which I have already given an account of, is, however, of very great antiquity. It seems to have been the doctrine of the greater part of those philosophers who, about and after the age of Augustus, called themselves Eclectics, who pretended to follow chiefly the opinions of Plato and Pythagoras, and who upon that account are commonly known by the name of the later Platonists.

In the divine nature, according to these authors, benevolence or love was the sole principle of action, and directed the exertion of all the other attributes. The wisdom of the deity was employed in finding out the means for bringing about those ends which his goodness

ſuggeſted, as his infinite power was exerted to execute them. Benevolence, however, was ſtill the ſupreme and governing attribute, to which the others were ſubſervient, and from which the whole excellency, or the whole morality, if I may be allowed ſuch an expreſſion, of the divine operations, was ultimately derived. The whole perfection and virtue of the human mind conſiſted in ſome reſemblance or participation of the divine perfections, and, conſequently, in being filled with the ſame principle of benevolence and love which influenced all the actions of the deity. The actions of men which flowed from this motive were alone truly praiſe-worthy, or could claim any merit in the ſight of the deity. It was by actions of charity and love only that we could imitate, as became us, the conduct of God, that we could expreſs our humble and devout admiration of his infinite perfections, that by foſtering in our own minds the ſame divine principle, we could bring our own affections to a greater reſemblance with his holy attributes, and thereby become more proper objects of his love and eſteem; till at laſt we arrived at that immediate converſe and communication with the deity to which it was the great object of this philoſophy to raiſe us.

This ſyſtem, as it was much eſteemed by many antient fathers of the chriſtian church, ſo after the reformation it was adopted by ſeveral divines of the moſt eminent piety and learning and of the moſt amiable manners; particularly, by Dr. Ralph Cudworth, by Dr. Henry

Henry More, and by Mr. John Smith of Cambridge. But of all the patrons of this ſyſtem, antient or modern, the late Dr. Hutcheſon, was undoubtedly, beyond all compariſon, the moſt acute, the moſt diſtinct, the moſt philoſophical, and what is of the greateſt conſequence of all, the ſobereſt and moſt judicious.

That virtue conſiſts in benevolence is a notion ſupported by many appearances in human nature. It has been obſerved already that proper benevolence is the moſt graceful and agreeable of all the affections, that it is recommended to us by a double ſympathy, that as its tendency is neceſſarily beneficent, it is the proper object of gratitude and reward, and that upon all theſe accounts it appears to our natural ſentiments to poſſeſs a merit ſuperior to any other. It has been obſerved too that even the weakneſſes of benevolence are not very diſagreeable to us, whereas thoſe of every other paſſion are always extremely diſguſting. Who does not abhor exceſſive malice, exceſſive ſelfiſhneſs, or exceſſive reſentment? But the moſt exceſſive indulgence even of partial friendſhip is not ſo offenſive. It is the benevolent paſſions only which can exert themſelves without any regard or attention to propriety, and yet retain ſomething about them which is engaging. There is ſomething pleaſing even in mere inſtinctive good-will which goes on to do good offices without once reflecting whether by this conduct it is the proper object either of blame or approbation. It

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is not so with the other passions. The moment they are deserted, the moment they are unaccompanied by the sense of propriety, they cease to be agreeable.

As benevolence bestows upon those actions which proceed from it, a beauty superior to all others, so the want of it, and much more the contrary inclination, communicates a peculiar deformity to whatever evidences such a disposition. Pernicious actions are often punishable for no other reason than because they show a want of sufficient attention to the happiness of our neighbour.

Besides all this, Dr. Hutcheson * observed, that whenever in any action, supposed to proceed from benevolent affections, some other motive had been discovered, our sense of the merit of this action was just so far diminished as this motive was believed to have influenced it. If an action, supposed to proceed from gratitude, should be discovered to have arisen from an expectation of some new favour, or if what was apprehended to proceed from public spirit, should be found out to have taken its origin from the hope of a pecuniary reward, such a discovery would entirely destroy all notion of merit or praise-worthiness in either of these actions. Since, therefore, the mixture of any selfish motive, like that of a baser alloy, diminished or took away altogether the merit which would otherwise have belonged to any action, it was evident, he

* See Enquiry concerning virtue, sect. 1. and 2.

imagined,

imagined, that virtue must consist in pure and disinterested benevolence alone.

When those actions, on the contrary, which are commonly supposed to proceed from a selfish motive, are discovered to have arisen from a benevolent one, it greatly enhances our sense of their merit. If we believed of any person that he endeavoured to advance his fortune from no other view but that of doing friendly offices, and of making proper returns to his benefactors, we should only love and esteem him the more. And this observation seemed still more to confirm the conclusion, that it was benevolence only which could stamp upon any action the character of virtue.

Last of all, what, he imagined, was an evident proof of the justness of this account of virtue, in all the disputes of casuists concerning the rectitude of conduct, the public good, he observed, was the standard to which they constantly referred; thereby universally acknowledging that whatever tended to promote the happiness of mankind was right and laudable and virtuous, and the contrary, wrong, blameable, and vitious. In the late debates about passive obedience and the right of resistance, the sole point in controversy among men of sense was, whether universal submission would probably be attended with greater evils than temporary insurrections when privileges were invaded. Whether what, upon the whole, tended most to the happiness of mankind, was not also morally good, was never once, he said, made a question.

Since

Since benevolence, therefore, was the only motive which could beſtow upon any action the character of virtue, the greater the benevolence which was evidenced by any action, the greater the praiſe which muſt belong to it.

Thoſe actions which aimed at the happineſs of a great community, as they demonſtrated a more enlarged benevolence than thoſe which aimed only at that of a ſmaller ſyſtem, ſo were they, likewiſe, proportionally the more virtuous. The moſt virtuous of all affections, therefore, was that which embraced as its object the happineſs of all intelligent beings. The leaſt virtuous, on the contrary, of thoſe to which the character of virtue could in any reſpect belong, was that which aimed no further than at the happineſs of an individual, ſuch as a ſon, a brother, a friend.

In directing all our actions to promote the greateſt poſſible good, in ſubmitting all inferior affections to the deſire of the general happineſs of mankind, in regarding ourſelves but as one of the many, whoſe proſperity was to be purſued no further than it was conſiſtent with, or conducive to that of the whole, conſiſted the perfection of virtue.

Self-love was a principle which could never be virtuous in any degree or in any direction. It was vitious whenever it obſtructed the general good. When it had no other effect than to make the individual take care of his own happineſs, it was meerly innocent, and tho' it deſerved no praiſe, neither ought it to incur any

any blame. Those benevolent actions which were performed, notwithstanding some strong motive from self-interest, were the more virtuous upon that account. They demonstrated the strength and vigour of the benevolent principle.

Dr. Hutcheson * was so far from allowing self-love to be in any case a motive of virtuous actions, that even a regard to the pleasure of self-approbation, to the comfortable applause of our own consciences, according to him, diminished the merit of a benevolent action. This was a selfish motive, he thought, which, so far as it contributed to any action, demonstrated the weakness of that pure and disinterested benevolence which could alone stamp upon the conduct of man the character of virtue. In the common judgments of mankind, however, this regard to the approbation of our own minds is so far from being considered as what can in any respect diminish the virtue of any action, that it is rather looked upon as the sole motive which deserves the appellation of virtuous.

Such is the account given of the nature of virtue in this amiable system, a system which has a peculiar tendency to nourish and support in the human heart the noblest and the most agreeable of all affections, and not only to check the injustice of self-love, but in some measure to discourage that principle altogether, by representing it as what could never

* Inquiry concerning virtue, sect. 2. art. 4. also illustrations on the moral sense, sect. 5. last paragraph.

reflect

reflect any honour upon those who were influenced by it.

As some of the other systems which I have already given an account of, do not sufficiently explain from whence arises the peculiar excellency of the supreme virtue of beneficence, so this system seems to have the contrary defect, of not sufficiently explaining from whence arises our approbation of the inferior virtues of prudence, vigilance, circumspection, temperance, constancy, firmness. The view and aim of our affections, the beneficent and hurtful effects which they tend to produce, are the only qualities at all attended to in this system. Their propriety and impropriety, their suitableness and unsuitableness, to the cause which excites them, are disregarded altogether.

Regard to our own private happiness and interest too, appear upon many occasions very laudable principles of action. The habits of oeconomy, industry, discretion, attention and application of thought, are generally supposed to be cultivated from self-interested motives, and at the same time are apprehended to be very praise-worthy qualities, which deserve the esteem and approbation of every body. The mixture of a selfish motive, it is true, seems often to sully the beauty of those actions which ought to arise from a benevolent affection. The cause of this, however, is not that self-love can never be the motive of a virtuous action, but that the benevolent principle appears in this particular case to want its due degree of strength, and to be altogether unsuitable

unsuitable to its object. The character, therefore, seems evidently imperfect, and upon the whole to deserve blame rather than praise. The mixture of a benevolent motive in an action to which self-love alone ought to be sufficient to prompt us, is not so apt indeed to diminish our sense of its propriety, or of the virtue of the person who performs it. We are not ready to suspect any person of being defective in selfishness. This is by no means the weak side of human nature, or the failing of which we are apt to be suspicious. If we could really believe, however, of any man that, was it not from a regard to his family and friends, he would not take that proper care of his health, his life, or his fortune, to which self-preservation alone ought to be sufficient to prompt him, it would undoubtedly be a failing, tho' one of those aimable failings, which render a person rather the object of pity than of contempt or hatred. It would still, however, somewhat diminish the dignity and respectableness of his character. Carelessness and want of oeconomy are universally disapproved of, not, however, as proceeding from a want of benevolence, but from a want of the proper attention to the objects of self-interest.

Though the standard by which casuists frequently determine what is right or wrong in human conduct, be its tendency to the welfare or disorder of society; it does not follow that a regard to the welfare of society should be the sole virtuous motive of action, but only that, in

in any competition, it ought to caſt the balance againſt all other motives.

Benevolence may, perhaps, be the ſole principle of action in the deity, and there are ſeveral, not improbable, arguments which tend to perſuade us that it is ſo. It is not eaſy to conceive what other motive an independent and all-perfect being, who ſtands in need of nothing external, and whoſe happineſs is compleat in himſelf, can act from. But whatever may be the caſe with the deity, ſo imperfect a creature as man, the ſupport of whoſe exiſtence requires ſo many things external to him, muſt often act from many other motives. The condition of human nature were peculiarly hard, if thoſe affections, which, by the very nature of our being, ought frequently to influence our conduct, could upon no occaſion appear virtuous, or deſerve eſteem and commendation from any body.

Thoſe three ſyſtems, that which places virtue in propriety, that which places it in prudence, and that which makes it conſiſt in benevolence, are the principal accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue. To one or other of them, all the other deſcriptions of virtue, how different ſoever they may appear, are eaſily reducible.

That ſyſtem which places virtue in obedience to the will of the deity, may be counted either among thoſe which make it conſiſt in prudence, or among thoſe which make it conſiſt in propriety. When it is aſked, why we ought to obey the will of the deity, this queſtion,

tion, which would be impious and absurd in the highest degree, if asked from any doubt that we ought to obey him, can admit but of two different answers. It must either be said that we ought to obey the will of the deity because he is a being of infinite power, who will reward us eternally if we do so, and punish us eternally if we do otherwise: Or it must be said, that independent of any regard to our own happiness, or to rewards and punishments of any kind, there is a congruity and fitness that a creature should obey its creator, that a limited and imperfect being should submit to one of infinite and incomprehensible perfections. Besides one or other of these two it is impossible to conceive that any other answer can be given to this question. If the first answer be the proper one, virtue consists in prudence, or in the proper pursuit of our own final interest and happiness; since it is upon this account that we are obliged to obey the will of the deity. If the second answer be the proper one, virtue must consist in propriety, since the ground of our obligation to obedience is the suitableness or congruity of the sentiments of humility and submission to the superiority of the object which excites them.

That system which places virtue in utility coincides too with that which makes it consist in propriety. According to this system all those qualities of the mind which are agreeable or advantageous, either to the person himself or to others, are approved of as virtuous, and the contrary disapproved of as vicious.

But the agreeableness or utility of any affection depends upon the degree which it is allowed to subsist in. Every affection is useful when it is confined to a certain degree of moderation; and every affection is disadvantageous when it exceeds the proper bounds. According to this system therefore, virtue consists, not in any one affection, but in the proper degree of all the affections. The only difference between it and that which I have been endeavouring to establish, is, that it makes utility, and not sympathy, or the correspondent affection of the spectator, the measure of this proper degree.

CHAP. IV.

Of licentious systems.

ALL those systems, which I have hitherto given an account of, suppose that there is a real and essential distinction between vice and virtue, whatever these qualities may consist in. There is a real and essential difference between the propriety and impropriety of any affection, between benevolence and any other principle of action, between real prudence and short-sighted folly or precipitate rashness. In the main too all of them contribute to encourage the praise-worthy, and to discourage the blameable disposition.

It may be true, perhaps, of some of them, that they tend, in some measure, to break the ballance

ballance of the affections, and to give the mind a particular biaſs to ſome principles of action, beyond the proportion that is due to them. The antient ſyſtems, which place virtue in propriety, ſeem chiefly to recommend the great, the awful and the reſpectable virtues, the virtues of ſelf-government and ſelf-command; fortitude, magnanimity, independency upon fortune, the contempt of all outward accidents, of pain, poverty, exile and death. It is in theſe great exertions that the nobleſt propriety of conduct is diſplayed. The ſoft, the amiable, the gentle virtues, all the virtues of indulgent humanity are, in compariſon, but little inſiſted upon, and ſeem, on the contrary, by the Stoics in particular, to have been often regarded as meer weakneſſes which it behoved a wiſe man not to harbour in his breaſt.

The benevolent ſyſtem, on the other hand, while it foſters and encourages all thoſe milder virtues in the higheſt degree, ſeems entirely to neglect the more awful and reſpectable qualities of the mind. It even denies them the appellation of virtues. It calls them moral abilities, and treats them as qualities which do not deſerve the ſame ſort of eſteem and approbation, that is due to what is properly denominated virtue. All thoſe principles of action which aim only at our own intereſt, it treats, if that be poſſible, ſtill worſe. So far from having any merit of their own, they diminiſh, it pretends, the merit of benevolence, when they co-operate with it: and prudence,

it is aſſerted, when employed only in promoting private intereſt, can never even be imagined a virtue.

That ſyſtem, again, which makes virtue conſiſt in prudence only, while it gives the higheſt encouragement to the habits of caution, vigilance, ſobriety and judicious moderation, ſeems to degrade equally both the amiable and reſpectable virtues, and to ſtrip the former of all their beauty, and the latter of all their grandeur.

But notwithſtanding theſe defects, the general tendency of each of thoſe three ſyſtems is to encourage the beſt and moſt laudable habits of the human mind: and it were well for ſociety, if, either mankind in general, or even thoſe few who pretend to live according to any philoſophical rule, were to regulate their conduct by the precepts of any one of them. We may learn from each of them ſomething that is both valuable and peculiar. If it was poſſible, by precept and exhortation, to inſpire the mind with fortitude and magnanimity, the antient ſyſtems of propriety would ſeem ſufficient to do this. Or if it was poſſible, by the ſame means, to ſoften it into humanity, and to awaken the affections of kindneſs and general love towards thoſe we live with, ſome of the pictures with which the benevolent ſyſtem preſents us, might ſeem capable of producing this effect. We may learn from the ſyſtem of Epicurus, though undoubtedly the worſt of all the three, how much the practice of both the amiable and re-

ſpectable

ſpectable virtues is conducive to our own intereſt, to our own eaſe and ſafety and quiet even in this life. As Epicurus placed happineſs in the attainment of eaſe and ſecurity, he exerted himſelf in a particular manner to ſhow that virtue was, not merely the beſt and the ſureſt, but the only means of acquiring thoſe invaluable poſſeſſions. The good effects of virtue, upon our inward tranquility and peace of mind, are what other philoſophers have chiefly celebrated. Epicurus, without neglecting this topic, has chiefly inſiſted upon the influence of that amiable quality on our outward proſperity and ſafety. It was upon this account that his writings were ſo much ſtudied in the antient world by men of all different philoſophical parties. It is from him that Cicero, the great enemy of the Epicurean ſyſtem, borrows his moſt agreeable proofs that virtue alone is ſufficient to ſecure happineſs. Seneca, though a ſtoic, the ſect moſt oppoſite to that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philoſopher more frequently than any other.

There are, however, ſome other ſyſtems which ſeem to take away altogether the diſtinction between vice and virtue, and of which the tendency is, upon that account, wholly pernicious: I mean the ſyſtems of the duke of Rocheſaucault and Dr. Mandeville. Though the notions of both theſe authors are in almoſt every reſpect erroneous, there are, however, ſome appearances in human nature which, when viewed in a cer-

tain manner, ſeem at firſt ſight to favour them. Theſe, firſt ſlightly ſketched out with the elegance and delicate preciſion of the duke of Rochefaucault, and afterwards more fully repreſented with the lively and humorous, though coarſe and ruſtic eloquence of Dr. Mandeville, have thrown upon their doctrines an air of truth and probability which is very apt to impoſe upon the unſkilful.

Dr. Mandeville, the moſt methodical of thoſe two authors, conſiders whatever is done from a ſenſe of propriety, from a regard to what is commendable and praiſe-worthy, as being done from a love of praiſe and commendation, or as he calls it from vanity. Man, he obſerves, is naturally much more intereſted in his own happineſs than in that of others, and it is impoſſible that in his heart he can ever really prefer their proſperity to his own. Whenever he appears to do ſo, we may be aſſured that he impoſes upon us, and that he is then acting from the ſame ſelfiſh motives as at all other times. Among his other ſelfiſh paſſions, vanity is one of the ſtrongeſt, and he is always eaſily flattered and greatly delighted with the applauſes of thoſe about him. When he appears to ſacrifice his own intereſt to that of his companions, he knows that this conduct will be highly agreeable to their ſelf-love, and that they will not fail to expreſs their ſatisfaction by beſtowing upon him the moſt extravagant praiſes. The pleaſure which he expects from this, overbalances, in his opinion, the intereſt which he

he abandons in order to procure it. His conduct, therefore, upon this occasion, is in reality just as selfish, and arises from just as mean a motive as upon any other. He is flattered, however, and he flatters himself with the belief that it is entirely disinterested; since, unless this was supposed, it would not seem to merit any commendation either in his own eyes or in those of others. All public spirit, therefore, all preference of public or private interest, is, according to him, a meer cheat and imposition upon mankind; and that human virtue which is so much boasted of, and which is the occasion of so much emulation among men, is the meer offspring of flattery begot upon pride.

Whether the most generous and public spirited actions may not, in some sense, be regarded as proceeding from self-love, I shall not at present examine. The decision of this question is not, I apprehend, of any importance towards establishing the reality of virtue, since self-love may frequently be a virtuous motive of action. I shall only endeavour to show that the desire of doing what is honourable and noble, of rendering ourselves the proper objects of esteem and approbation, cannot with any propriety be called vanity. Even the love of well-grounded fame and reputation, the desire of acquiring esteem by what is really estimable, does not deserve that name. The first is the love of virtue, the noblest and the best passion of human nature. The second is the love of true glory, a passion

inferior no doubt to the former, but which in dignity appears to come immediately after it. He is guilty of vanity who desires praise for qualities which are either not praise-worthy in any degree, or not in that degree in which he expects to be praised for them; who sets his character upon the frivolous ornaments of dress and equipage, or the equally frivolous accomplishments of ordinary behaviour. He is guilty of vanity who desires praise for what indeed very well deserves it, but what he perfectly knows does not belong to him. The empty coxcomb who gives himself airs of importance which he has no title to, the silly liar who assumes the merit of adventures which never happened, the foolish plagiary who gives himself out for the author of what he has no pretensions to, are properly accused of this passion. He too is said to be guilty of vanity who is not contented with the silent sentiments of esteem and approbation, who seems to be fonder of their noisy expressions and acclamations than of the sentiments themselves, who is never satisfied but when his own paaises are ringing in his ears, and who sollicits with the most anxious importunity all external marks of respect, is fond of titles, of compliments, of being visited, of being attended, of being taken notice of in public places with the appearance of deference and attention. This frivolous passion is altogether different from either of the two former, and is the passion of the lowest, and the least of mankind

mankind, as they are of the nobleſt and the greateſt.

But though theſe three paſſions, the deſire of rendering ourſelves the proper objects of honour and eſteem; or of becoming what is honourable and eſtimable; the deſire of acquiring honour and eſteem by really deſerving thoſe ſentiments; and the frivolous deſire of praiſe at any rate, are widely different; though the two former are always approved of, while the latter never fails to be deſpiſed; there is, however, a certain remote affinity among them, which, exaggerated by the humorous and diverting eloquence of this lively author, has enabled him to impoſe upon his readers. There is an affinity between vanity and the love of true glory, as both theſe paſſions aim at acquiring eſteem and approbation. But they are different in this, that the one is a juſt, reaſonable and equitable paſſion, while the other is unjuſt, abſurd and ridiculous. The man who deſires eſteem for what is really eſtimable, deſires nothing but what he is juſtly entitled to, and what cannot be refuſed him without ſome ſort of injury. He, on the contrary, who deſires it upon any other terms, demands what he has no juſt claim to. The firſt is eaſily ſatisfied, is not apt to be jealous or ſuſpicious that we do not eſteem him enough, and is ſeldom ſollicitous about receiving many external marks of our regard. The other, on the contrary, is never to be ſatisfied, is full of jealouſy and ſuſpicion that we do not eſteem him ſo much as he deſires, becauſe

because he has some secret consciousness that he desires more than he deserves. The least neglect of ceremony, he considers as a mortal affront, and as an expression of the most determined contempt. He is restless and impatient, and perpetually afraid that we have lost all respect for him, and is upon this account always anxious to obtain new expressions of esteem, and cannot be kept in temper but by continual attendance and adulation.

There is an affinity too between the desire of becoming what is honourable and estimable, and the desire of honour and esteem, between the love of virtue and the love of true glory. They resemble one another not only in this respect, that both aim at really being what is honourable and noble, but even in that respect in which the love of true glory resembles what is properly called vanity, some reference to the sentiments of others. The man of the greatest magnanimity, who desires virtue for its own sake, and is most indifferent about what actually are the opinions of mankind with regard to him, is still, however, delighted with the thoughts of what they should be, with the consciousness that though he may neither be honoured nor applauded, he is still the proper object of honour and applause, and that if mankind were cool and candid and consistent with themselves, and properly informed of the motives and circumstances of his conduct, they would not fail to honour and applaud him. Tho' he

he despises the opinions which are actually entertained of him, he has the highest value for those which ought to be entertained of him. That he might think himself worthy of those honourable sentiments, and, whatever was the idea which other men might conceive of his character, that when he should put himself in their situation, and consider, not what was, but what ought to be their opinion, he should always have the highest idea of it himself, was the great and exalted motive of his conduct. As even in the love of virtue, therefore, there is still some reference, though not to what is, yet to what in reason and propriety ought to be, the opinion of others, there is even in this respect some affinity between it, and the love of true glory. There is, however, at the same time, a very great difference between them. The man who acts solely from a regard to what is right and fit to be done, from a regard to what is the proper object of esteem and approbation, though these sentiments should never be bestowed upon him, acts from the most sublime and godlike motive which human nature is even capable of conceiving. The man, on the other hand, who while he desires to merit approbation, is at the same time anxious to obtain it, though he too is laudable in the main, yet his motives have a greater mixture of human infirmity. He is in danger of being mortified by the ignorance and injustice of mankind, and his happiness is exposed to the envy of his rivals, and the folly of the public. The happiness of the other, on the contrary,

contrary, is altogether ſecure and independent of fortune, and of the caprice of thoſe he lives with. The contempt and hatred which may be thrown upon him by the ignorance of mankind, he conſiders as not belonging to him, and is not at all mortified by it. Mankind deſpiſe and hate him from a falſe notion of his character and conduct. If they knew him better, they would eſteem and love him. It is not him whom, properly ſpeaking, they hate and deſpiſe, but another perſon whom they miſtake him to be. Our friend, whom we ſhould meet at a maſquerade in the garb of our enemy, would be more diverted than mortified, if under that diſguiſe we ſhould vent our indignation againſt him. Such are the ſentiments of a man of real magnanimity, when expoſed to unjuſt cenſure. It ſeldom happens, however, that human nature arrives at this degree of firmneſs. Though none but the weakeſt and moſt worthleſs of mankind are much delighted with falſe glory, yet, by a ſtrange inconſiſtency, falſe ignominy is often capable of mortifying thoſe who appear the moſt reſolute and determined.

Dr. Mandeville is not ſatisfied with repreſenting the frivolous motive of vanity, as the ſource of all thoſe actions which are commonly accounted virtuous. He endeavours to point out the imperfection of human virtue in many other reſpects. In every caſe, he pretends, it falls ſhort of that compleat ſelf-denial which it pretends to, and, inſtead of a conqueſt, is commonly no more than a concealed

concealed indulgence of our paſſions. Wherever our reſerve with regard to pleaſure falls ſhort of the moſt aſcetic abſtinence, he treats it as groſs luxury and ſenſuality. Every thing, according to him, is luxury which exceeds what is abſolutely neceſſary for the ſupport of human nature, ſo that there is vice even in the uſe of a clean ſhirt, or of a convenient habitation. The indulgence of the inclination to ſex, in the moſt lawful union, he conſiders as the ſame ſenſuality with the moſt hurtful gratification of that paſſion, and derides that temperance and that chaſtity which can be practiſed at ſo cheap a rate. The ingenious ſophiſtry of his reaſoning, is here, as upon many other occaſions, covered by the ambiguity of language. There are ſome of our paſſions which have no other names except thoſe which mark the diſagreeable and offenſive degree. The ſpectator is more apt to take notice of them in this degree than in any other. When they ſhock his own ſentiments, when they give him ſome ſort of antipathy and uneaſineſs, he is neceſſarily obliged to attend to them, and is from thence naturally led to give them a name. When they fall in with the natural ſtate of his own mind, he is very apt to overlook them altogether, and either gives them no name at all, or, if he gives them any, it is one which marks rather the ſubjection and reſtraint of the paſſion, than the degree which it ſtill is allowed to ſubſiſt in, after it is ſo ſubjected and reſtrained.

Thus the common names of the * love of pleasure, and of the love of sex denote a vitious and offensive degree of those passions. The words temperance and chastity, on the other hand, seem to mark rather the restraint and subjection which they are kept under, than the degree which they are still allowed to subsist in. When he can show, therefore, that they still subsist in some degree, he imagines, he has entirely demolished the reality of the virtues of temperance and chastity, and shown them to be meer impositions upon the inattention and simplicity of mankind. Those virtues, however, do not require an entire insensibility to the objects of the passions which they mean to govern. They only aim at restraining the violence of those passions so far as not to hurt the individual, and neither disturb nor offend the society.

It is the great fallacy of Dr. Mandeville's book † to represent every passion as wholly vitious, which is so in any degree and in any direction. It is thus that he treats every thing as vanity which has any reference, either to what are, or what ought to be the sentiments of others: and it is by means of this sophistry, that he establishes his favourite conclusion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taste for the elegant arts and improvements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in dress, furniture,

* Luxury and lust.

† Fable of the Bees.

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or equipage, for architecture, ſtatuary, painting and muſic, is to be regarded as luxury, ſenſuality and oſtentation, even in thoſe whoſe ſituation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of thoſe paſſions, it is certain that luxury, ſenſuality and oſtentation are public benefits: ſince, without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to beſtow ſuch opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find encouragement, and muſt languiſh for want of employment. Some popular aſcetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our paſſions, were the real foundation of this licentious ſyſtem. It was eaſy for Dr. Mandeville to prove, firſt, that this entire conqueſt never actually took place among men; and, ſecondly, that, if it was to take place, univerſally, it would be pernicious to ſociety, by putting an end to all induſtry and commerce, and in a manner to the whole buſineſs of human life. By the firſt of theſe propoſitions he ſeemed to prove that there was no real virtue, and that what pretended to be ſuch, was a meer cheat and impoſition upon mankind; and by the ſecond, that private vices were public benefits, ſince without them no ſociety could proſper or flouriſh.

Such is the ſyſtem of Dr. Mandeville, which once made ſo much noiſe in the world, and which, though, perhaps, it never gave occaſion to more vice than what would have been without it, at leaſt taught that vice, which

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arose from other causes, to appear with more effrontery, and to avow the corruption of its motives with a profligate audaciousness which had never been heard of before.

But how destructive soever this system may appear, it could never have imposed upon so great a number of persons, nor have occasioned so general an alarm among those who are the friends of better principles, had it not in some respects bordered upon the truth. A system of natural philosophy may appear very plausible, and be for a long time very generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature, nor any sort of resemblance to the truth. The vortices of Des Cartes were regarded by a very ingenious nation, for near a century together, as a most satisfactory account of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. Yet it has been demonstrated, to the conviction of all mankind, that these pretended causes of those wonderful effects, not only do not actually exist, but are utterly impossible, and if they did exist, could produce no such effects as are ascribed to them. But it is otherwise with systems of moral philosophy, and an author who pretends to account for the origin of our moral sentiments, cannot deceive us so grossly, nor depart so very far from all resemblance to the truth. When a traveller gives an account of some distant country, he may impose upon our credulity the most groundless and absurd fictions as the most certain matters of fact. But when a person pretends to inform us of what passes

passes in our neighbourhood, and of the affairs of the very parish which we live in, though here too, if we are so careless as not to examine things with our own eyes, he may deceive us in many respects, yet the greatest falshoods which he imposes upon us must bear some resemblance to the truth, and must even have a considerable mixture of truth in them. An author who treats of natural philosophy, and pretends to assign the causes of the great phænomena of the universe, pretends to give an account of the affairs of a very distant country, concerning which he may tell us what he pleases, and as long as his narration keeps within the bounds of seeming possibility, he need not despair of gaining our belief. But when he proposes to explain the origin of our desires and affections, of our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, he pretends to give an account, not only of the affairs of the very parish that we live in, but of our own domestic concerns. Though here too, like indolent masters who put their trust in a steward who deceives them, we are very liable to be imposed upon, yet we are incapable of passing any account which does not preserve some little regard to the truth. Some of the articles, at least, must be just, and even those which are most overcharged must have had some foundation, otherwise the fraud would be detected even by that careless inspection which we are disposed to give. The author who should assign, as the cause of any natu-

ral ſentiment, ſome principle which neither had any connection with it, nor reſembled any other principle which had ſome ſuch connection, would appear abſurd and ridiculous to the moſt injudicious and unexperienced reader.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the different ſyſtems which have been formed concerning the principle of approbation.

INTRODUCTION.

AFTER the inquiry concerning the nature of virtue, the next queſtion of importance in Moral Philoſophy, is concerning the principle of approbation, concerning the power or faculty of the mind which renders certain characters agreeable or diſagreeable to us, makes us prefer one tenor of conduct to another, denominate the one right and the other wrong, and conſider the one as the object of approbation, honour and reward; the other as that of blame, cenſure and puniſhment.

Three different accounts have been given of this principle of approbation. According to ſome, we approve and diſapprove both of our own actions and of thoſe of others, from ſelf-love only, or from ſome view of their tendency to our own happineſs or diſadvantage: according to others, reaſon, the ſame faculty by which we diſtinguiſh between truth and falſhood, enables us to diſtinguiſh between what is fit and unfit both in actions and affections: according to others this diſ-

tinction is altogether the effect of immediate ſentiment and feeling, and ariſes from the ſatisfaction or diſguſt with which the view of certain actions or affections inſpires us. Self-love, reaſon and ſentiment, therefore, are the three different ſources which have been aſſigned for the principle of approbation.

Before I proceed to give an account of thoſe different ſyſtems, I muſt obſerve, that the determination of this ſecond queſtion, though of the greateſt importance in ſpeculation, is of none in practice. The queſtion concerning the nature of virtue neceſſarily has ſome influence upon our notions of right and wrong in many particular caſes. That concerning the principle of approbation can poſſibly have no ſuch effect. To examine from what contrivance or mechaniſm within, thoſe different notions or ſentiments ariſe, is a meer matter of philoſophical curioſity.

CHAP. I.

Of thoſe ſyſtems which deduce the principle of approbation from ſelf-love.

THOSE who account for the principle of approbation from ſelf-love, do not all account for it in the ſame manner, and there is a good deal of confuſion and inaccuracy in all their different ſyſtems. According to Mr. Hobbs, and many of his followers,

ers *, man is driven to take refuge in ſociety, not by any natural love which he bears to his own kind, but becauſe without the aſſiſtance of others he is incapable of ſubſiſting with eaſe or ſafety. Society, upon this account, becomes neceſſary to him, and whatever tends to its ſupport and welfare, he conſiders as having a remote tendency to his own intereſt, and, on the contrary, whatever is likely to diſturb or deſtroy it, he regards as in ſome meaſure hurtful or pernicious to himſelf. Virtue is the great ſupport and vice the great diſturber of human ſociety. The former therefore, is agreeable, and the latter offenſive to every man; as from the one he foreſees the proſperity, and from the other the ruin and diſorder of what is ſo neceſſary for the comfort and ſecurity of his exiſtence.

That the tendency of virtue to promote, and of vice to diſturb the order of ſociety, when we conſider it coolly and philoſophically, reflects a very great beauty upon the one, and a very great deformity upon the other, cannot, as I have obſerved upon a former occaſion, be called in queſtion. Human ſociety, when we contemplate it in a certain abſtract and philoſophical light, appears like a great, an immenſe machine, whoſe regular and harmonious movements produce a thouſand agreeable effects. As in any other beautiful and noble machine that was the production of human art, whatever tended to render its move-

* Puffendorff. Mandeville.

ments more ſmooth and eaſy, would derive a beauty from this effect, and, on the contrary, whatever tended to obſtruct them would diſpleaſe upon that account: ſo virtue, which is, as it were, the fine poliſh to the wheels of ſociety, neceſſarily pleaſes; while vice, like the vile ruſt, which makes them jarr and grate upon one another, is as neceſſarily offenſive. This account, therefore, of the origin of approbation and diſapprobation, ſo far as it derives them from a regard to the order of ſociety, runs into that principle which gives beauty to utility, and which I have explained upon a former occaſion; and it is from thence that this ſyſtem derives all that appearance of probability which it poſſeſſes. When thoſe authors deſcribe the innumerable advantages of a cultivated and ſocial, above a ſavage and ſolitary life; when they expatiate upon the neceſſity of virtue and good order for the maintenance of the one, and demonſtrate how infallibly the prevalence of vice and diſobedience to the laws tend to bring back the other, the reader is charmed with the novelty and grandeur of thoſe views which they open to him; he ſees plainly a new beauty in virtue, and a new deformity in vice, which he had never taken notice of before, and is commonly ſo delighted with the diſcovery, that he ſeldom takes time to reflect, that this political view, having never occurred to him in his life before, cannot poſſibly be the ground of that approbation and diſapprobation with which

which he has always been accuſtomed to conſider thoſe different qualities.

When thoſe authors, on the other hand, deduce from ſelf-love the intereſt which we take in the welfare of ſociety, and the eſteem which upon that account we beſtow upon virtue, they do not mean, that when we in this age applaud the virtue of Cato, and deteſt the villainy of Catiline, our ſentiments are influenced by the notion of any benefit we receive from the one, or of any detriment we ſuffer from the other. It was not becauſe the proſperity or ſubverſion of ſociety, in thoſe remote ages and nations, was apprehended to have any influence upon our happineſs or miſery in the preſent times; that according to thoſe philoſophers, we eſteemed the virtuous, and blamed the diſorderly character. They never imagined that our ſentiments were influenced by any benefit or damage which we ſuppoſed actually to redound to us, from either; but by that which might have redounded to us, had we lived in thoſe diſtant ages and countries; or by that which might ſtill redound to us, if in our own times we ſhould meet with characters of the ſame kind. The idea, in ſhort, which thoſe authors were groping about, but which they were never able to unfold diſtinctly, was that indirect ſympathy which we feel with the gratitude or reſentment of thoſe who received the benefit or ſuffered the damage reſulting from ſuch oppoſite characters: and it was this which they were indiſtinctly pointing at, when they ſaid,

that it was not the thought of what we had gained or ſuffered which prompted our applauſe or indignation, but the conception or imagination of what we might gain or ſuffer if we were to act in ſociety with ſuch aſſociates.

Sympathy, however, cannot, in any ſenſe, be regarded as a ſelfiſh principle. When I ſympathize with your ſorrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded in ſelf-love, becauſe it ariſes from bringing your caſe home to myſelf, from putting myſelf in your ſituation, and thence conceiving what I ſhould feel in the like circumſtances. But though ſympathy is very properly ſaid to ariſe from an imaginary change of ſituations with the perſon principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not ſuppoſed to happen to me in my own perſon and character, but in that of the perſon with whom I ſympathize. When I condole with you for the loſs of your only ſon, in order to enter into your grief I do not conſider what I, a perſon of ſuch a character and profeſſion, ſhould ſuffer, if I had a ſon, and if that ſon was unfortunately to die: but I conſider what I ſhould ſuffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumſtances with you, but I change perſons and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the leaſt upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the leaſt ſelfiſh. How can that be regarded as a ſelfiſh paſſion, which does not ariſe even from the imagination of

any thing that has befallen, or that relates to myſelf, in my own proper perſon and character, but which is entirely occupied about what relates to you. A man may ſympathize with a woman in child-bed; though it is impoſſible that he ſhould conceive himſelf as ſuffering her pains in his own proper perſon, and character. That whole account of human nature, however, which deduces all ſentiments and affections from ſelf-love, which has made ſo much noiſe in the world, but which, ſo far as I know, has never yet been fully and diſtinctly explained, ſeems to me to have ariſen from ſome confuſed miſapprehenſion of the ſyſtem of ſympathy.

CHAP. II.

Of thoſe ſyſtems which make reaſon the principle of approbation.

It is well known to have been the doctrine of Mr. Hobbs, that a ſtate of nature, is a ſtate of war; and that antecedent to the inſtitution of civil government there could be no ſafe or peaceable ſociety among men. To preſerve ſociety, therefore, according to him, was to ſupport civil government, and to diſtroy civil government was the ſame thing as to put an end to ſociety. But the exiſtence of civil government depends upon the obedience that is paid to the ſupreme magiſtrate. The moment he loſes his authority, all government

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is at an end. As ſelf-preſervation, therefore, teaches men to applaud whatever tends to promote the welfare of ſociety, and to blame whatever is likely to hurt it; ſo the ſame principle, if they would think and ſpeak conſiſtently, ought to teach them to applaud upon all occaſions obedience to the civil magiſtrate, and to blame all diſobedience and rebellion. The very ideas of laudable and blameable, ought to be the ſame with thoſe of obedience and diſobedience. The laws of the civil magiſtrate, therefore, ought to be regarded as the ſole ultimate ſtandards of what was juſt and unjuſt, of what was right and wrong.

It was the avowed intention of Mr. Hobbs, by propagating theſe notions, to ſubject the conſciences of men immediately to the civil, and not to the eccleſiaſtical powers, whoſe turbulence and ambition, he had been taught, by the example of his own times, to regard as the principal ſource of the diſorders of ſociety. His doctrine, upon this account, was peculiarly offenſive to Theologians, who accordingly did not fail to vent their indignation againſt him with great aſperity and bitterneſs. It was likewiſe offenſive to all ſound moraliſts, as it ſuppoſed that there was no natural diſtinction between right and wrong, that theſe were mutable and changeable and depended upon the meer arbitrary will of the civil magiſtrate. This account of things, therefore, was attacked from all quarters, and by all ſorts of weapons, by ſober reaſon as well as by furious declamation.

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In order to confute ſo odious a doctrine, it was neceſſary to prove, that antecedent to all law or poſitive inſtitution, the mind was naturally indowed with a faculty, by which it diſtinguiſhed in certain actions and affections, the qualities of right, laudable and virtuous, and in others thoſe of wrong, blameable and vitious.

Law, it was juſtly obſerved by Dr. Cudworth *, could not be the original ſource of thoſe diſtinctions; ſince upon the ſuppoſition of ſuch a law, it muſt either be right to obey it, and wrong to diſobey it, or indifferent whether we obeyed it, or diſobeyed it. That law which it was indifferent whether we obeyed or diſobeyed, could not, it was evident, be the ſource of thoſe diſtinctions; neither could that which it was right to obey and wrong to diſobey, ſince even this ſtill ſuppoſed the antecedent notions or ideas of right and wrong, and that obedience to the law was conformable to the idea of right, and diſobedience to that of wrong.

Since the mind, therefore, had a notion of thoſe diſtinctions antecedent to all law, it ſeemed neceſſarily to follow, that it derived this notion from reaſon, which pointed out the difference between right and wrong, in the ſame manner in which it did that between truth and falſehood: and this concluſion, which though true in ſome reſpects, is rather haſty in others, was more eaſily received at a

* Immutable morality, l. 1.

time

time when the abſtract ſcience of human nature was but in its infancy, and before the diſtinct offices and powers of the different faculties of the human mind had been carefully examined and diſtinguiſhed from one another. When this controverſy with Mr. Hobbs was carried on with the greateſt warmth and keenneſs, no other faculty had been thought of from which any ſuch ideas could poſſibly be ſuppoſed to ariſe. It became at this time, therefore, the popular doctrine, that the eſſence of virtue and vice did not conſiſt in the conformity or diſagreement of human actions with the law of a ſuperior, but in their conformity or diſagreement with reaſon, which was thus conſidered as the original ſource and principle of approbation and diſapprobation.

That virtue conſiſts in conformity to reaſon is true in ſome reſpects, and this faculty may very juſtly be conſidered, as in ſome ſenſe, the ſource and principle of approbation and diſapprobation, and of all ſolid judgments concerning right and wrong. It is by reaſon that we diſcover thoſe general rules of juſtice by which we ought to regulate our actions: and it is by the ſame faculty that we form thoſe more vague and indeterminate ideas of what is prudent, of what is decent, of what is generous or noble, which we carry conſtantly about with us, and according to which we endeavour, as well as we can, to model the tenor of our conduct. The general maxims of morality are formed, like all other general maxims, from experience and induction.

tion. We obſerve in a great variety of particular caſes what pleaſes or diſpleaſes our moral faculties, what theſe approve or diſapprove of, and, by induction from this experience, we eſtabliſh thoſe general rules. But induction is always regarded as one of the operations of reaſon. From reaſon, therefore, we are very properly ſaid to derive all thoſe general maxims and ideas. It is by theſe, however, that we regulate the greater part of our moral judgments, which would be extremely uncertain and precarious if they depended altogether upon what is liable to ſo many variations as immediate ſentiment and feeling, which the different ſtates of health and humour are capable of altering ſo eſſentially. As our moſt ſolid judgments, therefore, with regard to right and wrong are regulated by maxims and ideas derived from an induction of reaſon, virtue may very properly be ſaid to conſiſt in a conformity to reaſon, and ſo far this faculty may be conſidered as the ſource and principle of approbation and diſapprobation.

But though reaſon is undoubtedly the ſource of the general rules of morality, and of all the moral judgments which we form by means of them; it is altogether abſurd and unintelligible to ſuppoſe that the firſt perceptions of right and wrong can be derived from reaſon, even in thoſe particular caſes upon the experience of which the general rules are formed. Theſe firſt preceptions, as well as all other experiments upon which any general rules are found-

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ed, cannot be the object of reaſon, but of immediate ſenſe and feeling. It is by finding in a vaſt variety of inſtances that one tenor of conduct conſtantly pleaſes in a certain manner, and that another as conſtantly diſpleaſes the mind, that we form the general rules of morality. But reaſon cannot render any particular object either agreeable or diſagreeable to the mind for its own ſake. Reaſon may ſhow that this object is the means of obtaining ſome other which is naturally either pleaſing or diſpleaſing, and in this manner may render *it* either agreeable or diſagreeable for the ſake of ſomething elſe. But nothing can be agreeable or diſagreeable for its own ſake which is not rendered ſuch by immediate ſenſe and feeling. If virtue, therefore, in every particular inſtance, neceſſarily pleaſes for its own ſake, and if vice as certainly diſpleaſes the mind, *it* cannot be reaſon, but immediate ſenſe and feeling, which in this manner, reconciles us to the one, and alienates us from the other.

Pleaſure and pain are the great objects of deſire and averſion: but theſe are diſtinguiſhed not by reaſon but by immediate ſenſe and feeling. If virtue, therefore, is deſirable for its own ſake, and if vice is, in the ſame manner the object of averſion, it cannot be reaſon which originally diſtinguiſhes thoſe different qualities, but immediate ſenſe and feeling.

As reaſon, however, in a certain ſenſe, may juſtly be conſidered as the principle of approbation and diſapprobation, theſe ſentiments were,

were, through inattention, long regarded as originally flowing from the operations of this faculty. Dr. Hutcheſon had the merit of being the firſt who diſtinguiſhed with any degree of preciſion in what reſpect all moral diſtinctions may be ſaid to ariſe from reaſon, and in what reſpect they are founded upon immediate ſenſe and feeling. In his illuſtrations upon the moral ſenſe he has explained this ſo fully, and, in my opinion, ſo unanſwerably, that, if any controverſy is ſtill kept up about this ſubject, I can impute it to nothing, but either to inattention to what that gentleman has written, or to a ſuperſtitious attachment for certain forms of expreſſion, a weakneſs not very uncommon among the learned, eſpecially in ſubjects ſo deeply intereſting as the preſent, in which a man of virtue is often loath to abandon, even the propriety of a ſingle phraſe which he has been accuſtomed to.

CHAP. III.

Of thoſe ſyſtems which make ſentiment the principle of approbation.

THOSE ſyſtems which make ſentiment the principle of approbation may be divided into two different claſſes.

I. According to ſome the principle of approbation is founded upon a ſentiment of a peculiar nature, upon a particular power of perception

perception exerted by the mind at the view of certain actions or affections; ſome of which affecting this faculty in an agreeable and others in a diſagreeable manner, the former are ſtampt with the characters of right, laudable, and virtuous; the latter with thoſe of wrong, blameable and vitious. This ſentiment being of a peculiar nature diſtinct from every other, and the effect of a particular power of perception, they give it a particular name, and call it a moral ſenſe.

II. According to others, in order to account for the principle of approbation, there is no occaſion for ſuppoſing any new power of perception which had never been heard of before: nature, they imagine, acts here, as in all other caſes, with the ſtricteſt oeconomy, and produces a multitude of effects from one and the ſame cauſe; and ſympathy, a power which has always been taken notice of, and with which the mind is manifeſtly endowed, is, they think, ſufficient to account for all the effects aſcribed to this peculiar faculty.

I. Dr. Hutcheſon * had been at great pains to prove that the principle of approbation was not founded on ſelf-love. He had demonſtrated too that it could not ariſe from any operation of reaſon. Nothing remained, he thought, but to ſuppoſe it a faculty of a peculiar kind, with which nature had endowed the human mind, in order to produce this one particular and important effect. When ſelf-

* Enquiry concerning virtue.

love

love and reason were both excluded, it did not occur to him that there was any other known faculty of the mind which could in any respect answer this purpose.

This new power of perception he called a moral sense, and supposed it to be somewhat analogous to the external senses. As the bodies around us, by affecting these in a certain manner, appear to possess the different qualities of sound, taste, odour, colour; so the various affections of the human mind by touching this particular faculty in a certain manner, appear to possess the different qualities of amiable and odious, of virtuous and vitious, of right and wrong.

The various senses or powers of perception *, from which the human mind derives all its simple ideas, were, according to this system, of two different kinds, of which the one, were called the direct or antecedent, the other, the reflex or consequent senses. The direct senses were those faculties from which the mind derived the perception of such species of things as did not presuppose the antecedent perception of any other. Thus sounds and colours were objects of the direct senses. To hear a sound or to see a colour does not presuppose the antecedent perception of any other quality or object. The reflex or consequent senses, on the other hand, were those faculties from which the mind derived the perception of such species of things as presupposed

* Treatise of the passions.

the antecedent perception of ſome other. Thus harmony and beauty were objects of the reflex ſenſes. In order to perceive the harmony of a ſound, or the beauty of a colour, we muſt firſt perceive the ſound or the colour. The moral ſenſe was conſidered as a faculty of this kind. That faculty, which Mr. Locke calls reflection, and from which he derived the ſimple ideas of the different paſſions and emotions of the human mind, was, according to Dr. Hutcheſon, a direct internal ſenſe. That faculty again by which we perceived the beauty or deformity, the virtue or vice of thoſe different paſſions and emotions was a reflex, internal ſenſe.

Dr. Hutcheſon endeavoured ſtill further to ſupport this doctrine, by ſhewing that it was agreeable to the analogy of nature, and that the mind was endowed with a variety of other reflex ſenſes exactly ſimilar to the moral ſenſe, ſuch as a ſenſe of beauty and deformity in external objects; a public ſenſe, by which we ſympathize with the happineſs or miſery of our fellow-creatures; a ſenſe of ſhame and honour, and a ſenſe of ridicule.

But notwithſtanding all the pains which this ingenious philoſopher has taken to prove that the principle of approbation is founded in a peculiar power of perception, ſomewhat analogous to the external ſenſes, there are ſome conſequences, which he acknowledges to follow from this doctrine, that will, perhaps, be regarded by many as a ſufficient confuta-

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tion of it. The qualities, he allows *, which belong to the objects of any sense, cannot, without the greatest absurdity be ascribed to the sense itself. Who ever thought of calling the sense of seeing black or white, the sense of hearing loud or low, or the sense of tasting sweet or bitter? And, according to him, it is equally absurd to call our moral faculties virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil. These qualities belong to the objects of those faculties, not to the faculties themselves. If any man, therefore, was so absurdly constituted as to approve of cruelty and injustice as the highest virtues, and to disapprove of equity and humanity as the most pitiful vices, such a constitution of mind might indeed be regarded as inconvenient both to the individual and to the society, and likewise as strange, surprising and unnatural in itself; but it could not, without the greatest absurdity, be denominated vicious or morally evil.

Yet surely if we saw any man shouting with admiration and applause at a barbarous and unmerited execution, which some insolent tyrant had ordered, we should not think we were guilty of any great absurdity in denominating this behaviour vicious and morally evil in the highest degree, though it expressed nothing but depraved moral faculties, or an absurd approbation of this horrid action, as of what was noble, magnanimous and great. Our heart, I imagine, at the sight of such a

* Illustrations upon the moral sense. Sect. 1. page 237, et seq. Third Edition.

ſpectator, would forget for a while its ſympathy with the ſufferer, and feel nothing but horror and deteſtation, at the thought of ſo execrable a wretch. We ſhould abominate him even more than the tyrant who might be goaded on by the ſtrong paſſions of jealouſy, fear and reſentment, and upon that account be more excuſable. But the ſentiments of the ſpectator would appear altogether without cauſe or motive, and therefore moſt perfectly and compleatly deteſtable. There is no perverſion of ſentiment or affection which our heart would be more averſe to enter into, or which it would reject with greater hatred and indignation than one of this kind, and ſo far from regarding ſuch a conſtitution of mind as being meerly ſomething ſtrange or inconvenient, and not in any reſpect vitious or morally evil, we ſhould rather conſider it as the very laſt and moſt dreadful ſtage of moral depravity.

Correct moral ſentiments, on the contrary, naturally appear in ſome degree laudable and morally good. The man, whoſe cenſure and applauſe are upon all occaſions ſuited with the greateſt accuracy to the value or unworthineſs of the object, ſeems to deſerve a degree even of moral approbation. We admire the delicate preciſion of his moral ſentiments: they lead our own judgments, and upon account of their uncommon and ſurprizing juſtneſs, they even excite our wonder and applauſe. We cannot indeed be always ſure that the conduct of ſuch a perſon would be in any reſpect correſpondent

respondent to the precision and accuracy of his judgments concerning the conduct of others. Virtue requires habit and resolution of mind, as well as delicacy of sentiment; and unfortunately the former qualities are sometimes wanting, where the latter is in the greatest perfection. This disposition of mind, however, though it may sometimes be attended with imperfections, is incompatible with any thing that is grosly criminal, and is the happiest foundation upon which the superstructure of perfect virtue can be built. There are many men who mean very well, and seriously propose to do what they think their duty, who notwithstanding are disagreeable on account of the coarseness of their moral sentiments.

It may be said, perhaps, that though the principle of approbation is not founded upon any power of perception that is in any respect analogous to the external senses, it may still be founded upon a peculiar sentiment which answers this one particular purpose and no other. Approbation and disapprobation, it may be pretended, are certain feelings or emotions which arise in the mind upon the view of different characters and actions; and as resentment might be called a sense of injuries, or gratitude a sense of benefits, so these may very properly receive the name of a sense of right and wrong, or of a moral sense.

But this account of things, though it may not be liable to the same objections with the

foregoing, is expoſed to others which are equally unanſwerable.

Firſt of all, whatever variations any particular emotion may undergo, it ſtill preſerves the general features which diſtinguiſh it to be an emotion of ſuch a kind, and theſe general features are always more ſtriking and remarkable than any variation which it may undergo in particular caſes. Thus anger is an emotion of a particular kind: and accordingly its general features are always more diſtinguiſhable than all the variations it undergoes in particular caſes. Anger againſt a man, is, no doubt, ſomewhat different from anger againſt a woman, and that again from anger againſt a child. In each of thoſe three caſes, the general paſſion of anger receives a different modification from the particular character of its object, as may eaſily be obſerved by the attentive. But ſtill the general features of the paſſion predominate in all theſe caſes. To diſtinguiſh theſe, requires no nice obſervation: a very delicate attention, on the contrary, is neceſſary to diſcover their variations: every body takes notice of the former: ſcarce any body obſerves the latter. If approbation and diſapprobation, therefore, were, like gratitude and reſentment, emotions of a particular kind, diſtinct from every other, we ſhould expect that in all the variations which either of them might undergo, it would ſtill retain the general features which mark it to be an emotion of ſuch a particular kind, clear,

plain and easily distinguishable. But in fact it happens quite otherwise. If we attend to what we really feel when upon different occasions we either approve or disapprove, we shall find that our emotion in one case is often totally different from that in another, and that no common features can possibly be discovered between them. Thus the approbation with which we view a tender, delicate and humane sentiment, is quite different from that with which we are struck by one that appears great, daring and magnanimous. Our approbation of both may, upon different occasions, be perfect and intire; but we are softened by the one, and we are elevated by the other, and there is no sort of resemblance between the emotions which they excite in us. But, according to that system which I have been endeavouring to establish, this must necessarily be the case. As the emotions of the person whom we approve of, are quite opposite to one another, and as our approbation arises from sympathy with those opposite emotions, what we feel upon the one occasion, can have no sort of resemblance to what we feel upon the other. But this could not happen if approbation consisted in a peculiar emotion which had nothing in common with the sentiments we approved of, but which arose at the view of those sentiments, like any other passion at the view of its proper object. The same thing holds true with regard to disapprobation. Our horror for cruelty has no sort of resemblance to our contempt for mean-spiritedness. It is quite a

different ſpecies of diſcord which we feel at the view of thoſe two different vices, between our own minds and thoſe of the perſon whoſe ſentiments and behaviour we conſider.

Secondly, I have already obſerved, that not only the different paſſions or affections of the human mind which are approved or diſapproved of, appear morally good or evil, but that proper and improper approbation appear, to our natural ſentiments, to be ſtampt with the ſame characters. I would aſk, therefore, how it is, that, according to this ſyſtem, we approve or diſapprove of proper or improper approbation. To this queſtion, there is, I imagine, but one reaſonable anſwer, which can poſſibly be given. It muſt be ſaid that when the approbation with which our neighbour regards the conduct of a third perſon coincides with our own, we approve of his approbation, and conſider it as, in ſome meaſure, morally good; and that on the contrary, when it does not coincide with our own ſentiments, we diſapprove of it, and conſider it as, in ſome meaſure, morally evil. It muſt be allowed, therefore, that, at leaſt in this one caſe, the coincidence or oppoſition of ſentiments, between the obſerver and the perſon obſerved, conſtitutes moral approbation or diſapprobation. And if it does ſo in this one caſe, I would aſk, why not in every other? to what purpoſe imagine a new power of perception in order to account for thoſe ſentiments?

Againſt every account of the principle of approbation, which makes it depend upon a peculiar

peculiar ſentiment, diſtinct from every other, I would object; that it is ſtrange that this ſentiment, which providence undoubtedly intended to be the governing principle of human nature, ſhould hitherto have been ſo little taken notice of, as not to have got a name in any language. The word moral ſenſe is of very late formation, and cannot yet be conſidered as making part of the Engliſh tongue. The word approbation has but within theſe few years been appropriated to denote peculiarly any thing of this kind. In propriety of language we approve of whatever is entirely to our ſatisfaction, of the form of a building, of the contrivance of a machine, of the flavour of a diſh of meat. The word conſcience does not immediately denote any moral faculty by which we approve or diſapprove. Conſcience ſuppoſes, indeed, the exiſtence of ſome ſuch faculty, and properly ſignifies our conſciouſneſs of having acted agreeably or contrary to its directions. When love, hatred, joy, ſorrow, gratitude, reſentment, with ſo many other paſſions which are all ſuppoſed to be the ſubjects of this principle, have made themſelves conſiderable enough to get titles to know them by, is it not ſurprizing that the ſovereign of them all ſhould hitherto have been ſo little heeded, that, a few philoſophers excepted, no body has yet thought it worth while to beſtow a name upon it.

When we approve of any character or action, the ſentiments which we feel, are, according to the foregoing ſyſtem, derived from four

four sources, which are in some respects different from one another. First, we sympathize with the motives of the agent; secondly, we enter into the gratitude of those who receive the benefit of his actions; thirdly, we observe that his conduct has been agreeable to the general rules by which those two sympathies generally act; and, last of all, when we consider such actions as making a part of a system of behaviour which tends to promote the happiness either of the individual or of the society, they appear to derive a beauty from this utility, not unlike that which we ascribe to any well contrived machine. After deducting, in any one particular case, all that must be acknowledged to proceed from some one or other of these four principles, I should be glad to know what remains, and I shall freely allow this overplus to be ascribed to a moral sense, or to any other peculiar faculty, provided any body will ascertain precisely what this overplus is. It might be expected, perhaps, that if there was any such peculiar principle, such as this moral sense is supposed to be, we should feel it, in some particular cases, separated and detached from every other, as we often feel joy, sorrow, hope and fear, pure and unmixed with any other emotion. This however, I imagine, cannot even be pretended. I have never heard any instance alledged in which this principle could be said to exert itself alone and unmixed with sympathy or antipathy, with gratitude or resentment, with the perception of the agreement or disagreement of any action

tion to an eſtabliſhed rule, or laſt of all with that general taſte for beauty and order which is excited by inanimated as well as by animated objects.

II. There is another ſyſtem which attempts to account for the origin of our moral ſentiments from ſympathy, diſtinct from that which I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh. It is that which places virtue in utility, and accounts for the pleaſure with which the ſpectator ſurveys the utility of any quality from ſympathy with the happineſs of thoſe who are affected by it. This ſympathy is different both from that by which we enter into the motives of the agent, and from that by which we go along with the gratitude of the perſons who are benefited by his actions. It is the ſame principle with that by which we approve of a well contrived machine. But no machine can be the object of either of thoſe two laſt mentioned ſympathies. I have already, in the fourth part of this diſcourſe, given ſome account of this ſyſtem.

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SECTION IV.

Of the manner in which different authors have treated of the practical rules of morality.

IT was obſerved in the third part of this diſcourſe, that the rules of juſtice are the only rules of morality which are preciſe and accurate; that thoſe of all the other virtues are looſe, vague, and indeterminate; that the firſt may be compared to the rules of grammar; the others to thoſe which critics lay down for the attainment of what is ſublime and elegant in compoſition, and which preſent us rather with a general idea of the perfection we ought to aim at, than afford us any certain and infallible directions for acquiring it.

As the different rules of morality admit ſuch different degrees of accuracy, thoſe authors who have endeavoured to collect and digeſt them into ſyſtems have done it in two different manners; and one ſet has followed thro' the whole that looſe method to which they were naturally directed by the conſideration of one ſpecies of virtues; while another has as univerſally endeavoured to introduce into their precepts that ſort of accuracy of which only ſome of them are ſuſceptible. The firſt have wrote like critics, the ſecond like grammarians.

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I. The first, among whom we may count all the antient moralists, have contented themselves with describing in a general manner the different vices and virtues, and with pointing out the deformity and misery of the one disposition as well as the propriety and happiness of the other, but have not affected to lay down many precise rules that are to hold good unexceptionably in all particular cases. They have only endeavoured to ascertain, as far as language is capable of ascertaining, first, wherein consists the sentiment of the heart, upon which each particular virtue is founded, what sort of internal feeling or emotion it is which constitutes the essence of friendship, of humanity, of generosity, of justice, of magnanimity, and of all the other virtues as well as of the vices which are opposed to them: and, secondly, What is the general way of acting, the ordinary tone and tenor of conduct to which each of those sentiments would direct us, or how it is that a friendly, a generous, a brave, a just, and a humane man, would, upon ordinary occasions, chuse to act.

To characterize the sentiment of the heart, upon which each particular virtue is founded, though it requires both a delicate and an accurate pencil, is a task, however, which may be executed with some degree of exactness. It is impossible, indeed, to express all the variations which each sentiment either does or ought to undergo, according to every possible variation of circumstances. They are endless, and language wants names to mark

mark them by. The ſentiment of friendſhip, for example, which we feel for an old man is different from that which we feel for a young: that which we entertain for an auſtere man different from that which we feel for one of ſofter and gentler manners: and that again from what we feel for one of gay vivacity and ſpirit. The friendſhip which we conceive for a man is different from that with which a woman affects us, even where there is no mixture of any groſſer paſſion. What author could enumerate and aſcertain theſe and all the other infinite varieties which this ſentiment is capable of undergoing? But ſtill the general ſentiment of friendſhip and familiar attachment which is common to them all, may be aſcertained with a ſufficient degree of accuracy. The picture which is drawn of it, though it will always be in many reſpects incompleat, may, however, have ſuch a reſemblance as to make us know the original when we meet with it, and even diſtinguiſh it from other ſentiments to which it has a conſiderable reſemblance, ſuch as good-will, reſpect, eſteem, admiration.

To deſcribe, in a general manner, what is the ordinary way of acting to which each virtue would prompt us, is ſtill more eaſy. It is, indeed, ſcarce poſſible to deſcribe the internal ſentiment or emotion upon which it is founded, without doing ſomething of this kind. It is impoſſible by language to expreſs, if I may ſay ſo, the inviſible features of all the different modifications of paſſion as they ſhow themſelves

themſelves within. There is no other way of marking and diſtinguiſhing them from one another, but by deſcribing the effects which they produce without, the alterations which they occaſion in the countenance, in the air and external behaviour, the reſolutions they ſuggeſt, the actions they prompt to. It is thus that Cicero, in the firſt book of his Offices, endeavours to direct us to the practice of the four cardinal virtues, and that Ariſtotle in the practical parts of his ethics, points out to us the different habits by which he would have us regulate our behaviour, ſuch as liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, and even jocularity and good humour, qualities, which that indulgent philoſopher has thought worthy of a place in the catalogue of the virtues, though the lightneſs of that approbation which we naturally beſtow upon them, ſhould not ſeem to entitle them to ſo venerable a name.

Such works preſent us with agreeable and lively pictures of manners. By the vivacity of their deſcriptions they inflame our natural love of virtue, and increaſe our abhorrence of vice: by the juſtneſs as well as delicacy of their obſervations they may often help both to correct and to aſcertain our natural ſentiments with regard to the propriety of conduct, and ſuggeſting many nice and delicate attentions, form us to a more exact juſtneſs of behaviour, than what, without ſuch inſtruction, we ſhould have been apt to think of. In treating of the rules of morality,

lity, in this manner, consists the science which is properly called ethics, a science, which though like criticism, it does not admit of the most accurate precision, is, however, both highly useful and agreeable. It is of all others the most susceptible of the embellishments of eloquence, and by means of them of bestowing, if that be possible, a new importance upon the smallest rules of duty. Its precepts, when thus dressed and adorned, are capable of producing upon the flexibility of youth, the noblest and most lasting impressions, and as they fall in with the natural magnanimity of that generous age, they are able to inspire, for a time at least, the most heroic resolutions, and thus tend both to establish and confirm the best and most useful habits of which the mind of man is susceptible. Whatever precept and exhortation can do to animate us to the practice of virtue, is done by this science delivered in this manner.

II. The second set of moralists, among whom we may count all the casuists of the middle and latter ages of the christian church, as well as all those who in this and in the preceding century have treated of what is called natural jurisprudence, do not content themselves with characterizing in this general manner that tenor of conduct which they would recommend to us, but endeavour to lay down exact and precise rules for the direction of every circumstance of our behaviour. As justice is the only virtue with regard to which such exact rules can properly

be given; it is this virtue, that has chiefly fallen under the consideration of those two different sets of writers. They treat of it, however, in a very different manner.

Those, who write upon the principles of Jurisprudence, consider only what, the person to whom the obligation is due, ought to think himself entitled to exact by force; what every impartial spectator would approve of him for exacting, or what a judge or arbiter, to whom he had submitted his case, and who had undertaken to do him justice, ought to oblige the other person to suffer or to perform. The casuists, on the other hand, do not so much examine what it is, that might properly be exacted by force, as what it is, that the person who owes the obligation ought to think himself bound to perform from the most sacred and scrupulous regard to the general rules of justice, and from the most conscientious dread, either of wronging his neighbour, or of violating the integrity of his own character. It is the end of jurisprudence to prescribe rules for the decisions of judges and arbiters. It is the end of casuistry to prescribe rules for the conduct of a good man. By observing all the rules of jurisprudence, supposing them ever so perfect, we should deserve nothing but to be free from external punishment. By observing those of casuistry, supposing them such as they ought to be, we should be entitled to considerable praise by the exact and scrupulous delicacy of our behaviour.

It may frequently happen that a good man ought to think himself bound, from a sacred and conscientious regard to the general rules of justice, to perform many things which it would be the highest injustice to extort from him, or for any judge or arbiter to impose upon him by force. To give a trite example; a highway-man, by the fear of death, obliges a traveller to promise him a certain sum of money. Whether such a promise, extorted in this manner by unjust force, ought to be regarded as obligatory, is a question that has been very much debated.

If we consider it meerly as a question of jurisprudence, the decision can admit of no doubt. It would be absurd to suppose that the highway-man can be entitled to use force to constrain the other to perform. To extort the promise was a crime which deserved the highest punishment, and to extort the performance would only be adding a new crime to the former. He can complain of no injury who has been only deceived by the person by whom he might justly have been killed. To suppose that a judge ought to enforce the obligation of such promises, or that the magistrate ought to allow them to sustain action at law, would be the most ridiculous of all absurdities. If we consider this question, therefore, as a question of jurisprudence we can be at no loss about the decision.

But if we consider it as a question of casuistry, it will not be so easily determined. Whether a good man, from a conscientious regard

regard to that most sacred rule of justice, which commands the observance of all serious promises, would not think himself bound to perform, is at least much more doubtful. That no regard is due to the disappointment of the wretch who brings him into this situation, that no injury is done to the robber, and consequently that nothing can be extorted by force, will admit of no sort of dispute. But whether some regard is not, in this case, due to his own dignity and honour, to the inviolable sacredness of that part of his character which makes him reverence the law of truth and abhor every thing that approaches to treachery and falshood, may, perhaps, more reasonably be made a question. The casuists accordingly are greatly divided about it. One party, with whom we may count Cicero among the antients, among the moderns, Puffendorf, Barbeyrac his commentator, and above all the late Dr. Hutcheson, one who in most cases was by no means a loose casuist, determine, without any hesitation, that no sort of regard is due to any such promise, and that to think otherwise is meer weakness and superstition. Another party, among whom we may reckon * some of the antient fathers of the church, as well as some very eminent modern casuists, have been of another opinion, and have judged all such promises obligatory.

If we consider the matter according to the

* St. Augustine, la Placette.

common ſentiments of mankind, we ſhall find that ſome regard would be thought due even to a promiſe of this kind; but that it is impoſſible to determine how much, by any general rule that will apply to all caſes without exception. The man who was quite frank and eaſy in making promiſes of this kind, and who violated them with as little ceremony, we ſhould not chuſe for our friend and companion. A gentleman who ſhould promiſe a highway-man five pounds and not perform would incur ſome blame. If the ſum promiſed, however, was very great, it might be more doubtful, what was proper to be done. If it was ſuch, for example, that the payment of it would entirely ruin the family of the promiſer, if it was ſo great as to be ſufficient for promoting the moſt uſeful purpoſes, it would appear in ſome meaſure criminal, at leaſt extremely improper, to throw it, for the ſake of a punctilio, into ſuch worthleſs hands. The man who ſhould beggar himſelf, or who ſhould throw away an hundred thouſand pounds, though he could afford that vaſt ſum, for the ſake of obſerving ſuch a parole with a thief, would appear, to the common ſenſe of mankind, abſurd and extravagant in the higheſt degree. Such profuſion would ſeem inconſiſtent with his duty, with what he owed both to himſelf and others, and what, therefore, regard to a promiſe extorted in this manner, could by no means authorize. To fix, however, by any preciſe rule, what degree of regard ought to be

be paid to it, or what might be the greateſt ſum which could be due from it, is evidently impoſſible. This would vary according to the characters of the perſons, according to their circumſtances, according to the ſolemnity of the promiſe, and even according to the incidents of the rencounter: and if the promiſer had been treated with a great deal of that ſort of gallantry, which is ſometimes to be met with in perſons of the moſt abandoned characters, more would ſeem due than upon other occaſions. It may be ſaid in general, that exact propriety requires the obſervance of all ſuch promiſes, wherever it is not inconſiſtent with ſome other duties that are more ſacred; ſuch as regard to the public intereſt, to thoſe whom gratitude, whom natural affection, or whom the laws of proper beneficence ſhould prompt us to provide for. But, as was formerly taken notice of, we have no preciſe rules to determine what external actions are due from a regard to ſuch motives, nor, conſequently, when it is that thoſe virtues are inconſiſtent with the obſervance of ſuch promiſes.

It is to be obſerved, however, that whenever ſuch promiſes are violated, though for the moſt neceſſary reaſons, it is always with ſome degree of diſhonour to the perſon who made them. After they are made, we may be convinced of the impropriety of obſerving them. But ſtill there is ſome fault in having made them. It is at leaſt a departure from the higheſt and nobleſt maxims of magnani-

mity and honour. A brave man ought to die, rather than make a promise which he can neither keep without folly, nor violate without ignominy. For some degree of ignominy always attends a situation of this kind. Treachery and falshood are vices so dangerous, so dreadful, and at the same time, such as may so easily, and, upon many occasions, so safely be indulged, that we are more jealous of them than of almost any other. Our imagination therefore attaches the idea of shame to all violations of faith, in every circumstance and in every situation. They resemble, in this respect, the violations of chastity in the fair sex, a virtue of which, for the like reasons, we are excessively jealous; and our sentiments are not more delicate with regard to the one, than with regard to the other. Breach of chastity dishonours irretriveably. No circumstances, no sollicitation can excuse it; no sorrow, no repentance atone for it. We are so nice in this respect that even a rape dishonours, and the innocence of the mind cannot, in our imagination, wash out the pollution of the body. It is the same case with the violation of faith, when it has been solemnly pledged, even to the most worthless of mankind. Fidelity is so necessary a virtue, that we apprehend it in general to be due even to those to whom nothing else is due, and whom we think it lawful to kill and destroy. It is to no purpose that the person who has been guilty of the breach of it, urges that he promised in order to save his life, and that he broke

broke his promise because it was inconsistent with some other respectable duty to keep it. These circumstances may alleviate, but cannot entirely wipe out his dishonour. He appears to have been guilty of an action with which, in the imaginations of men, some degree of shame is inseparably connected. He has broke a promise which he had solemnly averred he would maintain; and his character, if not irretrievably stained and polluted, has at least a ridicule affixed to it, which it will be very difficult entirely to efface; and no man, I imagine, who had gone through an adventure of this kind, would be fond of telling the story.

This instance may serve to show wherein consists the difference between casuistry, and jurisprudence, even when both of them consider the obligations of the general rules of justice.

But though this difference be real and essential, though those two sciences propose quite different ends, the sameness of the subject has made such a similarity between them, that the greater part of authors whose professed design was to treat of jurisprudence, have determined the different questions they examine, sometimes according to the principles of that science, and sometimes according to those of casuistry, without distinguishing and, perhaps, without being themselves aware when they did the one, and when the other.

The doctrine of the casuists, however, is by no means confined to the consideration of

what a conſcientious regard to the general rules of juſtice, would demand of us. It embraces many other parts of chriſtian and moral duty. What ſeems principally to have given occaſion to the cultivation of this ſpecies of ſcience was the cuſtom of auricular confeſſion, introduced by the Roman Catholic ſuperſtition, in times of barbariſm and ignorance. By that inſtitution, the moſt ſecret actions, and even the thoughts of every perſon, which could be ſuſpected of receding in the ſmalleſt degree from the rules of chriſtian purity were to be revealed to the confeſſor. The confeſſor informed his penitents whether, and in what reſpect they had violated their duty, and what pennance it behoved them to undergo, before he could abſolve them in the name of the offended deity.

The conſciouſneſs, or even the ſuſpicion of having done wrong, is a load upon every mind, and is accompanied with anxiety and terror in all thoſe who are not hardened by long habits of iniquity. Men, in this, as in all other diſtreſſes, are naturally eager to diſburthen themſelves of the oppreſſion which they feel upon their thoughts, by unboſoming the agony of their mind to ſome perſon whoſe ſecrecy and diſcretion they can confide in. The ſhame, which they ſuffer from this acknowledgment, is fully compenſated by that alleviation of their uneaſineſs which the ſympathy of their confident ſeldom fails to occaſion. It relieves them to find that they are not altogether unworthy of regard, and that

that however their past conduct may be censured, their present disposition is at least approved of, and is perhaps sufficient to compensate the other, at least to maintain them in some degree of esteem with their friend. A numerous and artful clergy had, in those times of superstition, insinuated themselves into the confidence of almost every private family. They possessed all the little learning which the times could afford, and their manners, though in many respects rude and disorderly, were polished and regular compared with those of the age they lived in. They were regarded, therefore, not only as the great directors of all religious, but of all moral duties. Their familiarity gave reputation to whoever was so happy as to possess it, and every mark of their disapprobation stamped the deepest ignominy upon all who had the misfortune to fall under it. Being considered as the great judges of right and wrong, they were naturally consulted about all scruples that occurred, and it was reputable for any person to have it known that he made those holy men the confidents of all such secrets, and took no important or delicate step in his conduct without their advice and approbation. It was not difficult for the clergy, therefore, to get it established as a general rule, that they should be entrusted with what it had already become fashionable to entrust them, and with what they generally would have been entrusted, though no such rule had been established. To qualify them-

selves

selves for confessors became thus a necessary part of the study of churchmen and divines, and they were thence led to collect what are called cases of conscience, nice and delicate situations in which it is hard to determine whereabouts the propriety of conduct may lie. Such works, they imagined, might be of use both to the directors of consciences and to those who were to be directed; and hence the origin of books of casuistry.

The moral duties which fell under the consideration of the casuists were chiefly those which can, in some measure at least, be circumscribed within general rules, and of which the violation is naturally attended with some degree of remorse and some dread of suffering punishment. The design of that institution which gave occasion to their works, was to appease those terrors of conscience which attend upon the infringement of such duties. But it is not every virtue of which the defect is accompanied with any very severe compunctions of this kind, and no man applies to his confessor for absolution, because he did not perform the most generous, the most friendly, or the most magnanimous action which, in his circumstances, it was possible to perform. In failures of this kind, the rule that is violated is commonly not very determinate, and is generally of such a nature too, that though the observance of it might entitle to honour and reward, the violation seems to expose to no positive blame, censure or punishment. The exercise of such virtues

virtues the casuists seem to have regarded as a sort of works of supererogation, which could not be very strictly exacted, and which it was, therefore, unnecessary for them to treat of.

The breaches of moral duty, therefore, which came before the tribunal of the confessor, and upon that account fell under the cognizance of the casuists, were chiefly of three different kinds.

First and principally, breaches of the rules of justice. The rules here are all express and positive, and the violation of them is naturally attended with the consciousness of deserving, and the dread of suffering, punishment both from God and man.

Secondly, breaches of the rules of chastity. These in all grosser instances are real breaches of the rules of justice, and no person can be guilty of them without doing the most unpardonable injury to some other. In smaller instances, when they amount only to a violation of those exact decorums which ought to be observed in the conversation of the two sexes, they cannot indeed justly be considered as violations of the rules of justice. They are generally, however, violations of a pretty plain rule, and, at least in one of the sexes, tend to bring ignominy upon the person who has been guilty of them, and consequently to be attended in the scrupulous with some degree of shame and contrition of mind.

Thirdly, breaches of the rules of veracity. The violation of truth, it is to be obſerved, is not always a breach of juſtice, though it is ſo upon many occaſions, and conſequently cannot always expoſe to any external puniſhment. The vice of common lying, though a moſt miſerable meanneſs, may frequently do hurt to no perſon, and in this caſe no claim of vengeance or ſatisfaction can be due either to the perſons impoſed upon, or to others. But though the violation of truth is not always a breach of juſtice, it is always a breach of a very plain rule, and what naturally tends to cover with ſhame the perſon who has been guilty of it. The great pleaſure of converſation, and indeed of ſociety, ariſes from a certain correſpondence of ſentiments and opinions, from a certain harmony of minds, which like ſo many muſical inſtruments coincide and keep time with one another. But this moſt delightful harmony cannot be obtained unleſs there is a free communication of ſentiments and opinions. We all deſire, upon this account, to feel how each other is affected, to penetrate into each others boſoms, and to obſerve the ſentiments and affections which really ſubſiſt there. The man who indulges us in this natural paſſion, who invites us into his heart, who, as it were, ſets open the gates of his breaſt to us, ſeems to exerciſe a ſpecies of hoſpitality more delightful than any other. No man, who is in ordinary good temper, can fail of pleaſing, if he has the courage to utter his real ſentiments

as

as he feels them, and because he feels them. It is this unreserved sincerity which renders even the prattle of a child agreeable. How weak and imperfect soever the views of the open-hearted, we take pleasure to enter into them, and endeavour, as much as we can, to bring down our own understanding to the level of their capacities, and to regard every subject in the particular light in which they appear to have considered it. This passion to discover the real sentiments of others is naturally so strong, that it often degenerates into a troublesome and impertinent curiosity to pry into those secrets of our neighbours which they have very justifiable reasons for concealing, and, upon many occasions, it requires prudence and a strong sense of propriety to govern this, as well as all the other passions of human nature, and to reduce it to that pitch which any impartial spectator can approve of. To disappoint this curiosity, however, when it is kept within proper bounds, and aims at nothing which there can be any just reason for concealing, is equally disagreeable in its turn. The man who eludes our most innocent questions, who gives no satisfaction to our most inoffensive inquiries, who plainly wraps himself up in impenetrable obscurity, seems, as it were, to build a wall about his breast. We run forward to get within it, with all the eagerness of harmless curiosity, and feel ourselves all at once pushed back with the rudest and most offensive violence. If to conceal is so dis-

agreeable,

agreeable, to attempt to deceive us is ſtill more diſguſting, even though we could poſſibly ſuffer nothing by the ſucceſs of the fraud. If we ſee that our companion wants to impoſe upon us, if the ſentiments and opinions which he utters appear evidently not to be his own, let them be ever ſo fine, we can derive no ſort of entertainment from them; and if ſomething of human nature did not now and then tranſpire through all the covers which falſhood and affectation are capable of wraping around it, a puppet of wood would be altogether as pleaſant a companion as a perſon who never ſpoke as he was affected. No man ever deceives, with regard to the moſt inſignificant matters, who is not conſcious of doing ſomething like an injury to thoſe he converſes with; and who does not inwardly bluſh and ſhrink back with ſhame and confuſion even at the ſecret thought of a detection. Breach of veracity, therefore, being always attended with ſome degree of remorſe and ſelf-condemnation, naturally fell under the cognizance of the caſuiſts.

The chief ſubjects of the works of the caſuiſts, therefore, were the conſcientious regard that is due to the rules of juſtice; how far we ought to reſpect the life and property of our neighbour; the duty of reſtitution; the laws of chaſtity and modeſty, and wherein conſiſted what, in their language, are called the ſins of concupiſcence: the rules of veracity and the obligation of oaths, promiſes and contracts of all kinds.

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It may be ſaid in general of the works of the caſuiſts that they attempted, to no purpoſe, to direct by preciſe Rules what it belongs to feeling and ſentiment only to judge of. How is it poſſible to aſcertain by rules the exact point at which, in every caſe, a delicate ſenſe of juſtice begins to run into a frivolous and weak ſcrupuloſity of conſcience? When it is that ſecrecy and reſerve begin to grow into diſſimulation? How far an agreeable irony may be carried, and at what preciſe point it begins to degenerate into a deteſtable lie? What is the higheſt pitch of freedom and eaſe of behaviour which can be regarded as graceful and becoming, and when it is that it firſt begins to run into a negligent and thoughtleſs licentiouſneſs? With regard to all ſuch matters, what would hold good in any one caſe would ſcarce do ſo exactly in any other, and what conſtitutes the propriety and happineſs of behaviour varies in every caſe with the ſmalleſt variety of ſituation. Books of caſuiſtry, therefore, are generally as uſeleſs as they are commonly tireſome. They could be of little uſe to one who ſhould conſult them upon occaſion, even ſuppoſing their deciſions to be juſt; becauſe, notwithſtanding the multitude of caſes collected in them, yet upon account of the ſtill greater variety of poſſible circumſtances, it is a chance, if among all thoſe caſes there be found one exactly parallel to that under conſideration. One, who is really anxious to do his duty, muſt be very weak, if he can imagine that he

he has much occasion for them; and with regard to one who is negligent of it, the stile of those writings is not such as is likely to awaken him to more attention. None of them tend to animate us to what is generous and noble. None of them tend to soften us to what is gentle and humane. Many of them, on the contrary, tend rather to teach us to chicane with our own consciences, and by their vain subtilties serve to authorise innumerable evasive refinements with regard to the most essential articles of our duty. That frivolous accuracy which they attempted to introduce into subjects which do not admit of it, almost necessarily betrayed them into those dangerous errors, and at the same time rendered their works dry and disagreeable, abounding in abstruse and metaphysical distinctions, but incapable of exciting in the heart any of those emotions which it is the principal use of books of morality to excite.

The two useful parts of moral philosophy, therefore, are Ethics and Jurisprudence: casuistry ought to be rejected altogether, and the ancient moralists appear to have judged much better, who, in treating of the same subjects, did not affect any such nice exactness, but contented themselves with describing, in a general manner, what is the sentiment upon which justice, modesty and veracity are founded, and what is the ordinary way of acting to which those virtues would commonly prompt us.

Something,

Something, indeed, not unlike the doctrine of the casuists, seems to have been attempted by several philosophers. There is something of this kind in the third book of Cicero's offices, where he endeavours like a casuist to give rules for our conduct in many nice cases, in which it is difficult to determine whereabouts the point of propriety may lie. It appears too, from many passages in the same book, that several other philosophers had attempted something of the same kind before him. Neither he nor they, however, appear to have aimed at giving a compleat system of this sort, but only meant to show how situations may occur, in which it is doubtful, whether the highest propriety of conduct consists in observing or in receding from what, in ordinary cases, are the rules of duty.

Every system of positive law may be regarded as a more or less imperfect attempt towards a system of natural jurisprudence, or towards an enumeration of the particular rules of justice. As the violation of justice is what men will never submit to from one another, the publick magistrate is under a necessity of employing the power of the commonwealth to enforce the practice of this virtue. Without this precaution, civil society would become a scene of bloodshed and disorder, every man revenging himself at his own hand whenever he fancied he was injured. To prevent the confusion which would attend upon every man's doing justice to himself, the magistrate,

in all governments that have acquired any considerable authority, undertakes to do justice to all, and promises to hear and to redress every complaint of injury. In all well-governed states too, not only judges are appointed for determining the controversies of individuals, but rules are prescribed for regulating the decisions of those judges; and these rules are, in general, intended to coincide with those of natural justice. It does not, indeed, always happen that they do so in every instance. Sometimes what is called the constitution of the state, that is, the interest of the government; sometimes the interest of particular orders of men who tyrannize the government, warp the positive laws of the country from what natural justice would prescribe. In some countries, the rudeness and barbarism of the people hinder the natural sentiments of justice from arriving at that accuracy and precision which, in more civilised nations, they naturally attain to. Their laws are like their manners gross and rude and undistinguishing. In other countries the unfortunate constitution of their courts of judicature hinders any regular system of jurisprudence from ever establishing itself among them, though the improved manners of the people may be such as would admit of the most accurate. In no country do the decisions of positive law coincide exactly, in every case, with the rules which the natural sense of justice would dictate. Systems of positive law, therefore, though they deserve the greatest

greatest authority, as the records of the sentiments of mankind in different ages and nations, yet can never be regarded as accurate systems of the rules of natural justice.

It might have been expected that the reasonings of lawyers, upon the different imperfections and improvements of the laws of different countries, should have given occasion to an enquiry into what were the natural rules of justice independent of all positive institution. It might have been expected that these reasonings should have led them to aim at establishing a system of what might properly be called natural jurisprudence, or a theory of the general principles which ought to run through and be the foundation of the laws of all nations. But tho' the reasonings of lawyers did produce something of this kind, and though no man has treated systematically of the laws of any particular country, without intermixing in his work many observations of this sort; it was very late in the world before any such general system was thought of, or before the philosophy of law was treated of by itself, and without regard to the particular institutions of any one nation. In none of the ancient moralists, do we find any attempt towards a particular enumeration of the rules of justice. Cicero in his offices, and Aristotle in his ethics, treat of justice in the same general manner in which they treat of all the other virtues. In the laws of Cicero and Plato, where we might naturally have expected some attempts to-

wards an enumeration of those rules of natural equity, which ought to be enforced by the positive laws of every country, there is, however, nothing of this kind. Their laws are laws of police, not of justice. Grotius seems to have been the first, who attempted to give the world any thing like a system of those principles which ought to run through, and be the foundation of the laws of all nations; and his treatise of the laws of war and peace, with all its imperfections, is perhaps at this day the most compleat work that has yet been given upon this subject. I shall in another discourse endeavour to give an account of the general principles of law and government, and of the different revolutions they have undergone in the different ages and periods of society, not only in what concerns justice, but in what concerns police, revenue and arms, and whatever else is the object of law. I shall not, therefore, at present enter into any further detail concerning the history of jurisprudence.

FINIS.