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count is not exaggerated, we have the teſtimony of no leſs an author than Eraſmus, who mentions it as a common occurrence: "Eos uſque ad pallorem, uſque ad convitia, uſque ad "ſputa, nonnunquam et uſque ad pugnos invicem digladiari, "alios ut Nominales, alios ut Reales, loqui *."

THE diſpute to which the foregoing obſervations relate, although, for ſome time after the Reformation, interrupted by theological diſquiſitions, has been ſince occaſionally revived by different writers; and, ſingular as it may appear, it has not yet been brought to a concluſion in which all parties are agreed. The names, indeed, of Nominaliſts and Realiſts exiſt no longer; but the point in diſpute between theſe two celebrated ſects, coincides preciſely with a queſtion which has been agitated in our own times, and which has led to one of the moſt beautiful ſpeculations of modern philoſophy.

OF the advocates who have appeared for the doctrine of the Nominaliſts, ſince the revival of letters, the moſt diſtinguiſhed are, Hobbes, Berkeley, and Hume. The former has, in various parts of his works, reprobated the hypotheſis of the Realiſts; and has ſtated the opinions of their antagoniſts

* The Nominaliſts procured the death of John Huſs, who was a Realiſt; and in their letter to Lewis King of France, do not pretend to deny that he fell a victim to the reſentment of their ſect. The Realiſts, on the other hand, obtained, in the year 1479, the condemnation of John de Weſalia, who was attached to the party of the Nominaliſts. Theſe contending ſects carried their fury ſo far as to charge each other with "the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt."

MOSHEIM's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.

with

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with that acuteneſs, ſimplicity, and preciſion, which diſtinguiſh all his writings*. The ſecond, conſidering (and, in my opinion, juſtly) the doctrines of the antients concerning univerſals, in ſupport of which ſo much ingenuity had been employed by the Realiſts, as the great ſource of myſtery and error in the abſtract ſciences, was at pains to overthrow it completely, by ſome very ingenious and original ſpeculations of his own. Mr. Hume's † view of the ſubject, as he himſelf acknowledges, does

* "The univerſality of one name to many things, hath been the cauſe that "men think the things themſelves are univerſal; and ſo ſeriouſly contend, that "beſides Peter and John, and all the reſt of the men that are, have been, or "ſhall be, in the world, there is yet ſomething elſe, that we call Man, viz. "Man in general; deceiving themſelves, by taking the univerſal, or general "appellation, for the thing it ſignifieth: For if one ſhould deſire the painter to "make him the picture of a man, which is as much as to ſay, of a man "in general; he meaneth no more, but that the painter ſhould chuſe what "man he pleaſeth to draw, which muſt needs be ſome of them that are, or "have been, or may be; none of which are univerſal. But when he would "have him to draw the picture of the king, or any particular perſon, he "limiteth the painter to that one perſon he chuſeth. It is plain, therefore, "that there is nothing univerſal but names; which are therefore called inde-"finite, becauſe we limit them not ourſelves, but leave them to be applied by "the hearer: whereas a ſingular name is limited and reſtrained to one of the "many things it ſignifieth; as when we ſay, this man, pointing to him, or "giving him his proper name, or by ſome ſuch other way."

HOBBES's Tripos, chap. v. § 6.

† "A very material queſtion has been ſtarted concerning abſtract or general "ideas: Whether they be general or particular in the mind's conception of "them? A great philoſopher has diſputed the received opinion in this particu-"lar; and has aſſerted, that all general ideas are nothing but particular ones "annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extenſive ſignification, "and makes them recal, upon occaſion, other individuals, which are ſimilar

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does not differ materially from that of Berkeley; whom, by the way, he ſeems to have regarded as the author of an opinion, of which he was only an expoſitor and defender; and which, ſince the days of Roſcelinus and Abelard, has been familiarly known in all the univerſities of Europe *.

NOTWITHSTANDING, however, the great merit of theſe writers, in defending and illuſtrating the ſyſtem of the Nominaliſts, none of them ſeem to me to have been fully aware of the important conſequences to which it leads. The Abbé de Condillac was, I believe, the firſt (if we except, perhaps, Leibnitz) who perceived that, if this ſyſtem be true, a talent for reaſoning muſt conſiſt, in a great meaſure, in a ſkilful uſe of language as an inſtrument of thought. The moſt valuable of his remarks on this ſubject are contained in a treatiſe *De*

" to them. As I look upon this to be one of the greateſt and moſt valuable " diſcoveries that have been made of late years in the republic of letters, I ſhall " here endeavour to confirm it by ſome arguments, which, I hope, will put it " beyond all doubt and controverſy."

Treatiſe of Human Nature, book i. part i. ſect. 7.

* Leibnitz, too, has declared himſelf a partiſan of this ſect, in a diſſertation " De Stilo Philoſophico Marii Nizolii." This Nizolius publiſhed a book at Parma, in the year 1553, entitled, " De Veris Principiis et " vera Ratione Philoſophandi;" in which he oppoſed ſeveral of the doctrines of Ariſtotle, particularly his opinion concerning univerſals. An edition of this work, with a Preface and Notes, was publiſhed by Leibnitz at Franckfort, in the year 1670. The Preface and Notes are to be found in the fourth volume of his works, by Dutens. (Geneva, 1768.) I have inſerted a ſhort extract from the former, in Note (I). at the end of the volume.

l' Art de Penſer, which forms the fourth volume of his "Cours "d'Etude." CHAP. IV.

DR. CAMPBELL, too, in his Philoſophy of Rhetoric, has founded, on the principles of Berkeley and Hume, a very curious and intereſting ſpeculation, of which I ſhall have occaſion afterwards to take notice.

THE explanation which the doctrines of theſe writers afford, of the proceſs of the mind in general reaſoning, is ſo ſimple, and at the ſame time, in my apprehenſion, ſo ſatisfactory, that, I own, it is with ſome degree of ſurpriſe I have read the attempts which have lately been made to revive the ſyſtem of the Realiſts. One of the ableſt of theſe attempts is by Dr. Price; who, in his very valuable Treatiſe on Morals, has not only employed his ingenuity in ſupport of ſome of the old tenets of the Platonic ſchool, but has even gone ſo far as to follow Plato's example, in connecting this ſpeculation about univerſals, with the ſublime queſtions of natural theology. The obſervations which he has offered in ſupport of theſe opinions, I have repeatedly peruſed with all the attention in my power; but without being able to enter into his views, or even to comprehend fully his meaning. Indeed, I muſt acknowledge, that it appears to me to afford no ſlight preſumption againſt the principles on which he proceeds, when I obſerve, that an author, remarkable, on moſt occaſions, for preciſion of ideas, and for perſpicuity of ſtyle, never fails to loſe himſelf in obſcurity and myſtery, when he enters on theſe diſquiſitions.

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DR. PRICE's reaſonings in proof of the exiſtence of univerſals, are the more curious, as he acquieſces in ſome of Dr. Reid's concluſions with reſpect to the ideal theory of perception. That there are in the mind, images or reſemblances of things external, he grants to be impoſſible; but ſtill he ſeems to ſuppoſe, that, in every exertion of thought, there is *ſomething* immediately preſent to the mind, which is the object of its attention. "When abſtract truth is contemplated, is "not" (ſays he) "the very object itſelf preſent to the mind? "When millions of intellects contemplate the equality of every "angle of a ſemicircle to a right angle, have they not all the "ſame object in view? Is this object nothing? Or is it only an "image, or kind of ſhadow? Theſe inquiries," he adds, "carry "our thoughts high *."

* The whole paſſage is as follows: "The word *idea* is ſometimes uſed to "ſignify the immediate object of the mind in thinking, conſidered as ſome-"thing in the mind, which repreſents the real object, but is different from it. "This ſenſe of an idea is derived from the notion, that when we think of any "external exiſtence, there is ſomething immediately preſent to the mind, "which it contemplates diſtinct from the object itſelf, that being at a diſtance. "But what is this? It is bad language to call it an image in the mind of the "object. Shall we ſay then, that there is indeed no ſuch thing? But would "not this be the ſame as to ſay that, when the mind is employed in viewing "and examining any object, which is either not preſent to it, or does not exiſt, "it is employed in viewing and examining nothing, and therefore does not then "think at all?—When abſtract truth is contemplated, is not the very object "itſelf preſent to the mind? When millions of intellects contemplate the equa-"lity of every angle in a ſemicircle to a right angle, have they not all the ſame "object in view? Is this object nothing? Or is it only an image or kind of "ſhadow?—Theſe inquiries carry our thoughts high."

THE

THE difficulty which has appeared ſo puzzling to this ingenious writer, is, in truth, more apparent than real. In the caſe of Perception, Imagination, and Memory, it has been already fully ſhewn, that we have no reaſon to believe the exiſtence of any thing in the mind diſtinct from the mind itſelf; and that, even upon the ſuppoſition that the fact were otherwiſe, our intellectual operations would be juſt as inexplicable as they are at preſent. Why then ſhould we ſuppoſe, that, in our general ſpeculations, there muſt exiſt in the mind ſome object of its thoughts, when it appears that there is no evidence of the exiſtence of any ſuch object, even when the mind is employed about individuals?

STILL, however, it may be urged, that, although, in ſuch caſes, there ſhould be no object of thought in the mind, there muſt exiſt ſomething or other to which its attention is directed. To this difficulty I have no anſwer to make, but by repeating the fact which I have already endeavoured to eſtabliſh; that there are only two ways in which we can poſſibly ſpeculate about claſſes of objects; the one, by means of a word or generic term; the other, by means of one particular individual of the claſs which we conſider as the repreſentative of the reſt; and that theſe two methods of carrying on our general ſpeculations, are at bottom ſo much the ſame, as to authoriſe us to lay it down as a principle, that, without the uſe of ſigns, all our thoughts muſt have related to individuals. When we reaſon, therefore, concerning claſſes or genera, the objects of our attention are merely ſigns; or if, in any inſtance, the generic word

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word ſhould recal ſome individual, this circumſtance is to be regarded only as the conſequence of an accidental aſſociation, which has rather a tendency to diſturb, than to aſſiſt us in our reaſoning.

WHETHER it might not have been poſſible for the Deity to have ſo formed us, that we might have been capable of reaſoning concerning claſſes of objects, without the uſe of ſigns, I ſhall not take upon me to determine. But this we may venture to affirm with confidence, that man is not ſuch a being. And, indeed, even if he were, it would not therefore neceſſarily follow, that there exiſts any thing in a genus, diſtinct from the individuals of which it is compoſed; for we know that the power which we have of thinking of particular objects without the medium of ſigns, does not in the leaſt depend on their exiſtence or non-exiſtence.

IT would be vain, however, for us, in inquiries of this nature, to indulge ourſelves in ſpeculating about poſſibilities. It is of more conſequence to remark the advantages which we derive from our actual conſtitution; and which, in the preſent inſtance, appear to me to be important and admirable: inaſmuch as it fits mankind for an eaſy interchange of their intellectual acquiſitions; by impoſing on them the neceſſity of employing, in their ſolitary ſpeculations, the ſame inſtrument of thought, which forms the eſtabliſhed medium of their communications with each other.

IN

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In the very ſlight ſketch which I have given of the controverſy between the Nominaliſts and the Realiſts about the exiſtence of univerſals, I have taken no notice of an intermediate ſect called Conceptualiſts; whoſe diſtinguiſhing tenet is ſaid to have been, that the mind has a power of forming general conceptions *. From the indiſtinctneſs and inaccuracy of their language on the ſubject, it is not a very eaſy matter to aſcertain preciſely what was their opinion on the point in queſtion; but, on the whole, I am inclined to think, that it amounted to the two following propoſitions: firſt, that we have no reaſon to believe the exiſtence of any eſſences, or univerſal ideas, correſponding to general terms; and ſecondly, that the mind has the power of reaſoning concerning *genera*, or claſſes of individuals, *without the mediation of language*. Indeed, I cannot think of any other hypotheſis which it is poſſible to form on the ſubject, diſtinct from thoſe of the two celebrated ſects already mentioned. In denying the exiſtence of univerſals, we

* "Nominales, deſerta paulo Abelardi hypotheſi, univerſalia *in notionibus* "atque conceptibus mentis ex rebus ſingularibus abſtractione formatis conſiſtere "ſtatuebant, unde conceptuales dicti ſunt."——BRUCKER, vol. iii. p. 908. (Lipſ. 1766.)

"Nominalium tres erant familiæ. Aliqui ut Rocelinus, univerſalia meras "eſſe voces docuerunt. Alii iterum in ſolo intellectu poſuerunt, atque meros "animi conceptus eſſe autumarunt, quos conceptuales aliqui vocant, et a no-"minalibus diſtinguunt, quanquam alii etiam confundant. Alii fuerunt, qui "univerſalia quæſiverunt, non tam in vocibus, quam in ſermonibus integris, "quod Joh. Sariſberienſis adſcribit Pet. Abelardo; quo quid intelligat ille, "mihi non ſatis liquet."——MORHOF. Polyhiſtor. Tom. Sec. lib. i. cap. xiii. § 2.

I have taken no notice of the laſt claſs of Nominaliſts here mentioned; as I find myſelf unable to comprehend their doctrine.

know

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know that the Conceptualiſts agreed with the Nominaliſts. In what, then, can we ſuppoſe that they differed from them, but about the neceſſity of language as an inſtrument of thought, in carrying on our general ſpeculations?

WITH this ſect of Conceptualiſts, Dr. Reid is diſpoſed to rank Mr. Locke; and I agree with him ſo far as to think, that, if Locke had any decided opinion on the point in diſpute, it did not differ materially from what I have endeavoured to expreſs in the two general propoſitions which I have juſt now ſtated. The apparent inconſiſtencies which occur in that part of his Eſſay in which the queſtion is diſcuſſed, have led ſubſequent authors to repreſent his ſentiments in different lights; but as theſe inconſiſtencies plainly ſhew, that he was neither ſatisfied with the ſyſtem of the Realiſts, nor with that of the Nominaliſts; they appear to me to demonſtrate that he leaned to the intermediate hypotheſis already mentioned, notwithſtanding the inaccurate and paradoxical manner in which he has expreſſed it *.

MAY I take the liberty of adding, that Dr. Reid's own opinion ſeems to me alſo to coincide nearly with that of the Conceptualiſts; or, at leaſt, to coincide with the two propoſitions which I have already ſuppoſed to contain a ſummary of their doctrine? The abſurdity of the antient opinion concerning univerſals, as maintained both by Plato and Ariſtotle, he has expoſed by the cleareſt and moſt deciſive arguments; not to mention, that, by his own very original and important ſpeculations concerning the ideal theory, he has completely deſtroyed that natural pre-

* See Note [K].

judice

judice from which the whole ſyſtem of univerſal ideas gradually took riſe. If, even in the caſe of individuals, we have no reaſon to believe the exiſtence of any object of thought in the mind, diſtinct from the mind itſelf, we are at once relieved from all the difficulties in which philoſophers have involved themſelves, by attempting to explain, in conſiſtency with that antient hypotheſis, the proceſs of the mind in its general ſpeculations.

On the other hand, it is no leſs clear, from Dr. Reid's criticiſms on Berkeley and Hume, that his opinion does not coincide with that of the Nominaliſts; and that the power which the mind poſſeſſes of reaſoning concerning claſſes of objects, appears to him to imply ſome faculty, of which no notice is taken in the ſyſtems of theſe philoſophers.

The long experience I have had of the candour of this excellent author, encourages me to add, that, in ſtating his opinion on the ſubject of univerſals, he has not expreſſed himſelf in a manner ſo completely ſatisfactory to my mind, as on moſt other occaſions. That language is not an eſſential inſtrument of thought in our general reaſonings, he has no where poſitively aſſerted. At the ſame time, as he has not affirmed the contrary, and as he has declared himſelf diſſatisfied with the doctrines of Berkeley and Hume, his readers are naturally led to conclude, that this is his real opinion on the ſubject. His ſilence on this point is the more to be regretted, as it is the only point about which there can be any reaſonable controverſy among thoſe who allow his refutation of the ideal hypotheſis to be ſatisfactory.

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In conſequence of that refutation, the whole diſpute between the Realiſts and the Conceptualiſts falls at once to the ground; but the diſpute between the Conceptualiſts and the Nominaliſts (which involves the great queſtion concerning the uſe of ſigns in general ſpeculation) remains on the ſame footing as before.

In order to juſtify his own expreſſions concerning univerſals; and in oppoſition to the language of Berkeley and Hume, Dr. Reid is at pains to illuſtrate a diſtinction between conception and imagination, which, he thinks, has not been ſufficiently attended to by philoſophers. "An univerſal," ſays he, "is "not an object of any external ſenſe, and therefore cannot be "imagined; but it may be diſtinctly conceived. When Mr. "Pope ſays, "The proper ſtudy of mankind is man;" I con- "ceive his meaning diſtinctly; although I neither imagine a "black or a white, a crooked or a ſtraight man. I can con- "ceive a thing that is impoſſible; but I cannot diſtinctly ima- "gine a thing that is impoſſible. I can conceive a propoſition "or a demonſtration, but I cannot imagine either. I can con- "ceive underſtanding and will, virtue and vice, and other "attributes of the mind; but I cannot imagine them. In like "manner, I can diſtinctly conceive univerſals; but I cannot "imagine them *."

It appears from this paſſage, that, by conceiving univerſals, Dr. Reid means nothing more, than underſtanding the meaning of propoſitions involving general terms. But the obſervations

* P. 482.

he

he has made (admitting them in their full extent) do not in the leaſt affect the queſtion about the neceſſity of ſigns, to enable us to ſpeculate about ſuch propoſitions. The vague uſe which metaphyſical writers have made of the word *conception*, (of which I had occaſion to take notice in a former chapter,) has contributed in part to embarraſs this ſubject. That we cannot conceive univerſals in a way at all analogous to that in which we conceive an abſent object of ſenſe, is granted on both ſides. Why then ſhould we employ the ſame word *conception*, to expreſs two operations of the mind which are eſſentially different? When we ſpeak of conceiving or underſtanding a general propoſition, we mean nothing more than that we have a conviction, (founded on our previous uſe of the words in which it is expreſſed,) that we have it in our power, at pleaſure, to ſubſtitute, inſtead of the general terms, ſome one of the individuals comprehended under them. When we hear a propoſition announced, of which the terms are not familiar to us; we naturally deſire to have it exemplified, or illuſtrated, by means of ſome particular inſtance; and when we are once ſatisfied by ſuch an application, that we have the interpretation of the propoſition at all times in our power, we make no ſcruple to ſay, that we conceive or underſtand its meaning; although we ſhould not extend our views beyond the words in which it is announced, or even although no particular exemplification of it ſhould occur to us at the moment. It is in this ſenſe only, that the terms of any general propoſition can poſſibly be underſtood: and therefore Dr. Reid's argument does not, in the leaſt, invalidate the doctrine of the Nominaliſts, that, without the uſe of language, (under which term I com-

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prehend every ſpecies of ſigns,) we ſhould never have been able to extend our ſpeculations beyond individuals.

THAT, in many caſes, we may ſafely employ in our reaſonings, general terms, the meaning of which we are not even able to interpret in this way, and conſequently, which are to us wholly inſignificant, I had occaſion already to demonſtrate, in a former part of this ſection.

SECTION IV.

Continuation of the ſame Subject.—Inferences with reſpect to the Uſe of Language as an Inſtrument of Thought, and the Errors in Reaſoning to which it occaſionally gives riſe.

IN the laſt Section, I mentioned Dr. Campbell, as an ingenious defender of the ſyſtem of the Nominaliſts; and I alluded to a particular application which he has made of their doctrine. The reaſonings which I had then in view, are to be found in the ſeventh chapter of the ſecond book of his Philoſophy of Rhetorick; in which chapter he propoſes to explain how it happens, "that nonſenſe ſo often eſcapes being detected, "both by the writer and the reader." The title is ſomewhat ludicrous in a grave philoſophical work; but the diſquiſition to which it is prefixed, contains many acute and profound remarks

marks on the nature and power of ſigns, both as a medium of communication, and as an inſtrument of thought.

DR. CAMPBELL's ſpeculations with reſpect to language as an inſtrument of thought, ſeem to have been ſuggeſted by the following paſſage in Mr. Hume's Treatiſe of Human Nature. "I believe, every one who examines the ſituation of his mind in reaſoning, will agree with me, that we do not annex diſtinct and complete ideas to every term we make uſe of; and that in talking of Government, Church, Negotiation, Conqueſt, we ſeldom ſpread out in our minds all the ſimple ideas of which theſe complex ones are compoſed. It is, however, obſervable, that, notwithſtanding this imperfection, we may avoid talking nonſenſe on theſe ſubjects; and may perceive any repugnance among the ideas, as well as if we had a full comprehenſion of them. Thus if, inſtead of ſaying, that, in war, the weaker have always recourſe to negotiation, we ſhould ſay, that they have always recourſe to conqueſt; the cuſtom which we have acquired, of attributing certain relations to ideas, ſtill follows the words, and makes us immediately perceive the abſurdity of that propoſition."

IN the remarks which Dr. Campbell has made on this paſſage, he has endeavoured to explain in what manner our habits of thinking and ſpeaking, gradually eſtabliſh in the mind ſuch relations among the words we employ, as enable us to carry on proceſſes of reaſoning by means of them, without attending in every inſtance to their particular ſignification. With moſt of his remarks on this ſubject I perfectly agree; but the illuſtrations he gives

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gives of them, are of too great extent to be introduced here; and I would not wiſh to run the riſk of impairing their perſpicuity, by attempting to abridge them. I muſt therefore refer ſuch of my readers as wiſh to proſecute the ſpeculation, to his very ingenious and philoſophical treatiſe.

" In conſequence of theſe circumſtances," (ſays Dr. Campbell,) " it happens that, in matters which are perfectly familiar to us, we are able to reaſon by means of words, without examining, in every inſtance, their ſignification. Almoſt all the poſſible applications of the terms (in other words, all the acquired relations of the ſigns) have become cuſtomary to us. The conſequence is, that an unuſual application of any term is inſtantly detected; this detection breeds doubt, and this doubt occaſions an immediate recourſe to ideas. The recourſe of the mind, when in any degree puzzled with the ſigns, to the knowledge it has of the things ſignified, is natural, and on ſuch ſubjects perfectly eaſy. And of this recourſe the diſcovery of the meaning, or of the unmeaningneſs of what is ſaid, is the immediate effect. But in matters that are by no means familiar, or are treated in an uncommon manner, and in ſuch as are of an abſtruſe and intricate nature, the caſe is widely different." The inſtances in which we are chiefly liable to be impoſed on by words without meaning are, (according to Dr. Campbell,) the three following:

FIRST, Where there is an exuberance of metaphor.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, When the terms moſt frequently occurring, denote things which are of a complicated nature, and to which the mind is not ſufficiently familiariſed. Such are the words, Government, Church, State, Conſtitution, Polity, Power, Commerce, Legiſlature, Juriſdiction, Proportion, Symmetry, Elegance.

THIRDLY, When the terms employed are very abſtract, and conſequently of very extenſive ſignification *. For an illuſtration of theſe remarks, I muſt refer the reader to the ingenious work which I juſt now quoted.

To the obſervations of theſe eminent writers, I ſhall take the liberty of adding, that we are doubly liable to the miſtakes they mention, when we make uſe of a language which is not perfectly familiar to us. Nothing, indeed, I apprehend, can ſhew more clearly the uſe we make of words in reaſoning than this, that an obſervation which, when expreſſed in our own language, ſeems trite or frivolous, often acquires the appearance of depth and originality, by being tranſlated into another.

* "The more general any word is in its ſignification, it is the more liable "to be abuſed by an improper or unmeaning application. A very general term "is applicable alike to a multitude of different individuals, a particular term is "applicable but to a few. When the rightful applications of a word are ex- "tremely numerous, they cannot all be ſo ſtrongly fixed by habit, but that, "for greater ſecurity, we muſt perpetually recur in our minds from the ſign to "the notion we have of the thing ſignified; and for the reaſon aforementioned, "it is in ſuch inſtances difficult preciſely to aſcertain this notion. Thus the lati- "tude of a word, though different from its ambiguity, hath often a ſimilar "effect."——Philoſophy of Rhetoric, vol. ii. p. 122.

For

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For my own part, at leaſt, I am conſcious of having been frequently led, in this way, to form an exaggerated idea of the merits of antient and of foreign authors; and it has happened to me more than once, that a ſentence, which ſeemed at firſt to contain ſomething highly ingenious and profound, when tranſlated into words familiar to me, appeared obviouſly to be a trite or a nugatory propoſition.

THE effect produced by an artificial and inverted ſtyle in our own language, is ſimilar to what we experience when we read a compoſition in a foreign one. The eye is too much dazzled to ſee diſtinctly. "Aliud ſtyli genus," (ſays Bacon,) "totum in eo eſt, ut verba ſint aculeata, ſententiæ conciſæ, "oratio denique potius verſa quam fuſa, quo fit, ut omnia, "per hujuſmodi artificium, magis ingenioſa videantur quam re "vera ſint. Tale invenitur in Senecca effuſius, in Tacito et "Plinio ſecundo moderatius."

THE deranged collocation of the words in Latin compoſition, aids powerfully the impoſition we have now been conſidering, and renders that language an inconvenient medium of philoſophical communication; as well as an inconvenient inſtrument of accurate thought. Indeed, in all languages in which this latitude in the arrangement of words is admitted, the aſſociations among words muſt be looſer, than where one invariable order is followed; and of conſequence, on the principles of Hume and Campbell, the miſtakes which are committed in reaſonings expreſſed in ſuch languages, will uot be ſo readily detected.

THE

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THE errors in reaſoning, to which we are expoſed in conſequence of the uſe of words as an inſtrument of thought, will appear the leſs ſurpriſing, when we conſider that all the languages which have hitherto exiſted in the world, have derived their origin from popular uſe; and that their application to philoſophical purpoſes, was altogether out of the view of thoſe men who firſt employed them. Whether it might not be poſſible to invent a language, which would at once facilitate philoſophical communication, and form a more convenient inſtrument of reaſoning and of invention, than thoſe we poſſeſs at preſent, is a queſtion of very difficult diſcuſſion; and upon which I ſhall not preſume to offer an opinion. The failure of Wilkins's very ingenious attempt towards a real character, and a philoſophical language, is not perhaps deciſive againſt ſuch a project; for, not to mention ſome radical defects in his plan, the views of that very eminent philoſopher do not ſeem to have extended much farther than to promote and extend the literary intercourſe among different nations. Leibnitz, ſo far as I know, is the only author who has hitherto conceived the poſſibility of aiding the powers of invention and of reaſoning, by the uſe of a more convenient inſtrument of thought; but he has no where explained his ideas on this very intereſting ſubject. It is only from a converſation of his with Mr. Boyle and Mr. Oldenburgh, when he was in England in 1673, and from ſome imperfect hints in different parts of his works *, that we find it had engaged his attention. In the courſe of this converſation he obſerved, that Wilkins had miſtaken the true end of

* See Note [L].

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a real character, which was not merely to enable different nations to correſpond eaſily together, but to aſſiſt the reaſon, the invention, and the memory. In his writings, too, he ſomewhere ſpeaks of an alphabet of human thoughts, which he had been employed in forming, and which, probably, (as Fontenelle has remarked,) had ſome relation to his univerſal language *.

THE new nomenclature which has been introduced into chymiſtry, ſeems to me to furniſh a ſtriking illuſtration of the effect of appropriated and well-defined expreſſions, in aiding the intellectual powers; and the period is probably not far diſtant, when ſimilar innovations will be attempted in ſome of the other ſciences.

* "M. Leibnitz avoit conçu le projet d'une langue philoſophique et univer-
" ſelle. Wilkins Evêque de Cheſter, et Dalgarno y avoient travaillé; mais dès
" le tems qu'il etoit en Angleterre, il avoit dit à Meſſieurs Boyle et d'Olden-
" bourg qu'il ne croyoit pas que ces grands hommes euſſent encore frappé au
" but. Ils pouvoient bien faire que des nations qui ne s'entendoient pas euſſent
" aiſément commerce, mais ils n'avoient pas attrappé les véritables caractères
" réels, qui étoient l'inſtrument le plus fin dont l'eſprit humain ſe pût ſervir, et
" qui devoient extrêmement faciliter et le raiſonnement, et la memoire, et
" l'invention des choſes. Ils devoient reſſembler, autant qu'il étoit poſſible, aux
" caractères d'algebre, qui en effet ſont très ſimples, et très expreſſifs, qui n'ont
" *jamais ni ſuperfluité, ni équivoque, et dont toutes les varietés ſont raiſonnées.*
" Il a parlé en quelque endroit, d'un alphabet des penſées humaines, qu'il me-
" ditoit. Selon toutes les apparences, cet alphabet avoit rapport à ſa langue
" univerſelle." *Eloge de M.* LEIBNITZ *par M. de* FONTENELLE.

SECTION V.

Of the Purpoſes to which the Powers of Abſtraction and Generaliſation are ſubſervient.

IT has been already ſhewn, that, without the uſe of ſigns, all our knowledge muſt neceſſarily have been limited to individuals, and that we ſhould have been perfectly incapable both of claſſification and general reaſoning. Some authors have maintained, that without the power of generaliſation, (which I have endeavoured to ſhew, means nothing more than the capacity of employing general terms,) it would have been impoſſible for us to have carried on any ſpecies of reaſoning whatever. But I cannot help thinking that this opinion is erroneous; or, at leaſt, that it is very imperfectly ſtated. The truth is, it appears to me to be juſt in one ſenſe of the word *reaſoning*, but falſe in another; and I even ſuſpect it is falſe in that ſenſe of the word in which it is moſt commonly employed. Before, therefore, it is laid down as a general propoſition, the meaning we are to annex to this very vague and ambiguous term, ſhould be aſcertained with preciſion.

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IT has been remarked by ſeveral writers, that the expectation which we feel of the continuance of the laws of nature, is not founded upon reaſoning; and different theories have of late been propoſed to account for its origin. Mr. Hume reſolves it into the aſſociation of ideas. Dr. Reid, on the other hand, maintains, that it is an original principle of our conſtitution, which does not admit of any explanation; and which, therefore, is to be ranked among thoſe general and ultimate facts, beyond which philoſophy is unable to proceed *. Without

* In inquiries of this nature, ſo far removed from the common courſe of literary purſuits, it always gives me pleaſure to remark a coincidence of opinion among different philoſophers; particularly among men of original genius, and who have been educated in different philoſophical ſyſtems. The following paſſage, in which M. de Condorcet gives an account of ſome of the metaphyſical opinions of the late Mr. Turgot, approaches very nearly to Dr. Reid's doctrines.

" La mémoire de nos ſenſations, et la faculté que nous avons de réfléchir " ſur ces ſenſations paſſées et de les combiner, ſont le ſeul principe de nos con- " noiſſances. La ſuppoſition qu'il exiſte des loix conſtantes auxquelles tous les " phénomenes obſervés ſont aſſujettis de maniere à reparoitre dans tous les temps, " dans toutes les circonſtances, tels qu'ils ſont déterminés par ces loix, eſt le " ſeul fondement de la certitude de ces connoiſſances.

" Nous avons la conſcience d'avoir obſervé cette conſtance, et un ſentiment " involontaire nous force de croire qu'elle continuera de ſubſiſter. La probabi- " lité qui en reſulte, quelque grande qu'elle ſoit, n'eſt pas une certitude. " Aucune relation néceſſaire ne lie pour nous le paſſé à l'avenir, ni la conſtance " de ce que j'ai vu à celle de ce que j'aurois continué d'obſerver ſi j'etois reſté " dans des circonſtances ſemblables; mais l' impreſſion qui me porte à regarder " comme exiſtant, comme réel ce qui m'a préſenté ce caractere de conſtance, " eſt irréſiſtible."—— *Vie de* TURGOT, partie ii. p. 56.

" Quand un François et un Anglois penſent de même, (ſays Voltaire,) il " faut bien qu'ils aient raiſon."

this

this principle of expectation, it would be impoſſible for us to accommodate our conduct to the eſtabliſhed courſe of nature; and, accordingly, we find that it is a principle coëval with our very exiſtence; and, in ſome meaſure, common to man with the lower animals.

It is an obvious conſequence of this doctrine, that, although philoſophers be accuſtomed to ſtate what are commonly called the laws of nature, in the form of general propoſitions, it is by no means neceſſary for the practical purpoſes of life, that we ſhould expreſs them in this manner; or even that we ſhould expreſs them in words at all. The philoſopher, for example, may ſtate it as a law of Nature, that "fire ſcorches;" or that "heavy bodies, when unſupported, fall downwards:" but, long before the uſe of artificial ſigns, and even before the dawn of reaſon, a child learns to act upon both of theſe ſuppoſitions. In doing ſo, it is influenced merely by the inſtinctive principle which has now been mentioned, directed in its operation (as is the caſe with many other inſtincts) by the experience of the individual. If man, therefore, had been deſtined for no other purpoſes, than to acquire ſuch an acquaintance with the courſe of nature, as is neceſſary for the preſervation of his animal exiſtence; he might have fulfilled all the ends of his being without the uſe of language.

As we are enabled, by our inſtinctive anticipation of phyſical events, to accommodate our conduct to what we foreſee is to happen, ſo we are enabled, in many caſes, to increaſe our

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power, by employing phyſical cauſes as inſtruments for the accompliſhment of our purpoſes; nay, we can employ a ſeries of ſuch cauſes, ſo as to accompliſh very remote effects. We can employ the agency of air, to increaſe the heat of a furnace; the furnace, to render iron malleable; and the iron to all the various purpoſes of the mechanical arts. Now, it appears to me, that all this may be conceived and done without the aid of language: and yet, aſſuredly, to diſcover a ſeries of means ſubſervient to a particular end; or, in other words, an effort of mechanical invention; implies, according to the common doctrines of philoſophers, the exerciſe of our reaſoning powers. In this ſenſe, therefore, of the word reaſoning, I am inclined to think, that it is not eſſentially connected with the faculty of generaliſation, or with the uſe of ſigns.

It is ſome confirmation of this concluſion, that ſavages, whoſe minds are almoſt wholly occupied with particulars, and who have neither inclination nor capacity for general ſpeculations, are yet occaſionally obſerved to employ a long train of means for accompliſhing a particular purpoſe. Even ſomething of this kind, but in a very inferior degree, may, I think, be remarked in the other animals; and that they do not carry it farther, is probably not the effect of their want of generaliſation, but of the imperfection of ſome of thoſe faculties which are common to them with our ſpecies; particularly of their powers of attention and recollection. The inſtances which are commonly produced, to prove that they are not deſtitute of the power of reaſoning, are all examples of that ſpecies of contrivance which has been mentioned; and are perfectly diſtinct from thoſe intellectual

tellectual proceſſes to which the uſe of ſigns is eſſentially ſubſervient *. CHAP. IV.

WHETHER that particular ſpecies of mechanical contrivance which has now been mentioned, and which conſiſts merely in employing a ſeries of phyſical cauſes to accompliſh an effect

One of the beſt atteſted inſtances which I have met with, of ſagacity in the lower animals, is mentioned by M. Bailly, in his *Lettre ſur les Animaux*, addreſſed to M. Le Roy.

" Un de mes amis, homme d'eſprit et digne de confiance, m'a raconté deux " faits dont il a été témoin. Il avoit un ſinge très intelligent; il s'amuſoit à " lui donner des noix dont l' animal etoit très friand; mais il les plaçoit aſſez " loin, pour que retenu par ſa chaîne, le ſinge ne pût pas les atteindre: après " bien des efforts inutiles qui ne ſervent qu'à préparer l'invention, le ſinge, " voyant paſſer un domeſtique portant une ſerviette ſous le bras, ſe ſaiſit de cette " ſerviette, et s'en ſervit pour atteindre à la noix et l'amener juſqu' à lui. La " maniere de caſſer la noix exigea une nouvelle invention; il en vint à bout, " en plaçant la noix à terre, en y faiſant tomber de haut une pierre ou un " caillou pour la briſer. Vous voyez, Monſieur, que ſans avoir connu, comme " Galilée, les loix de la chûte des corps, le ſinge avoit bien remarqué la force que " ces corps acquierent par la chûte. Ce moyen cependant ſe trouva en défaut. " Un jour qu'il avoit plu, la terre etoit molle, la noix enfonçoit, et la pierre " n'avoit plus d'action pour la briſer. Que fit le ſinge? Il alla chercher un " tuileau, plaça la noix deſſus, et en laiſſant tomber la pierre il briſa la noix " qui n'enfonçoit plus."——*Diſcours et Memoires par l'Auteur de l'Hiſtoire de l'Aſtronomie.* A Paris, 1790, tome ii. p. 126.

Admitting theſe facts to be accurately ſtated, they ſtill leave an eſſential diſtinction between man and brutes; for in none of the contrivances here mentioned, is there any thing analogous to thoſe intellectual proceſſes which lead the mind to general concluſions, and which (according to the foregoing doctrine) imply the uſe of general terms. Thoſe powers, therefore, which enable us to claſſify objects, and to employ ſigns as an inſtrument of thought, are, as far as we can judge, peculiar to the human ſpecies.

which

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which we cannot produce immediately, ſhould or ſhould not be dignified with the name of reaſoning, I ſhall not now inquire. It is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe to remark, that it is eſſentially different from thoſe intellectual proceſſes to which the uſe of ſigns is indiſpenſably neceſſary. At the ſame time, I am ready to acknowledge, that what I have now ſaid, is not ſtrictly applicable to thoſe more complicated mechanical inventions, in which a variety of powers are made to conſpire at once to produce a particular effect. Such contrivances, perhaps, may be found to involve proceſſes of the mind which cannot be carried on without ſigns. But theſe queſtions will fall more properly under our conſideration when we enter on the ſubject of reaſoning.

In general, it may be remarked, that, in ſo far as our thoughts relate merely to individual objects, or to individual events, which we have actually perceived, and of which we retain a diſtinct remembrance *, we are not under the neceſſity of

* I have thought it proper to add this limitation of the general propoſition; becauſe individual objects, and individual events, which have not fallen under the examination of our ſenſes, cannot poſſibly be made the ſubjects of our conſideration, but by means of language. The manner in which we think of ſuch objects and events, is accurately deſcribed in the following paſſage of Wollaſton; however unphiloſophical the concluſion may be which he deduces from his reaſoning.

" A man is not known ever the more to poſterity, becauſe his name is tranſ-
" mitted to them; he doth not live, becauſe his name does. When it is ſaid,
" Julius Cæſar ſubdued Gaul, beat Pompey, changed the Roman common-
" wealth into a monarchy, &c. it is the ſame thing as to ſay, the conqueror
" of

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of employing words. It frequently, however, happens, that when the ſubjects of our conſideration are particular, our reaſoning with reſpect to them may involve very general notions; and, in ſuch caſes, although we may conceive, without the uſe of words, the things about which we reaſon, yet we muſt neceſſarily have recourſe to language in carrying on our ſpeculations concerning them. If the *ſubjects* of our reaſoning be general, (under which deſcription I include all our reaſonings, whether more or leſs comprehenſive, which do not relate merely to individuals,) words are the ſole objects about which our thoughts are employed. According as theſe words are comprehenſive or limited in their ſignification, the concluſions we form will be more or leſs general; but this accidental circumſtance does not in the leaſt affect the nature of the intellectual proceſs; ſo that it may be laid down as a propoſition which holds without any exception, that, in every caſe, in which we extend our ſpeculations beyond individuals, language is not only an uſeful auxiliary, but is the ſole inſtrument by which they are carried on.

THESE remarks naturally lead me to take notice of what forms the characteriſtical diſtinction between the ſpeculations

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" of Pompey was Cæſar; that is, Cæſar, and the conqueror of Pompey, are the " ſame thing; and Cæſar is as much known by the one diſtinction as the other. " The amount then is only this: that the conqueror of Pompey conquered " Pompey; or ſomebody conquered Pompey; or rather, ſince Pompey is as " little known now as Cæſar, ſomebody conquered ſomebody. Such a poor " buſineſs is this boaſted immortality; and ſuch, as has been here deſcribed, is " the thing called glory among us!" *Religion of* NAT. DEL. p. 117.

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of the philoſopher and of the vulgar. It is not, that the former is accuſtomed to carry on his proceſſes of reaſoning to a greater extent than the latter; but that the concluſions he is accuſtomed to form, are far more comprehenſive, in conſequence of the habitual employment of more comprehenſive terms. Among the moſt unenlightened of mankind, we often meet with individuals who poſſeſs the reaſoning faculty in a very eminent degree; but as this faculty is employed merely about particulars, it never can conduct them to general truths; and, of conſequence, whether their purſuits in life lead them to ſpeculation or to action, it can only fit them for diſtinguiſhing themſelves in ſome very limited and ſubordinate ſphere. The philoſopher, whoſe mind has been familiariſed by education and by his own reflexions, to the correct uſe of more comprehenſive terms, is enabled, without perhaps a greater degree of intellectual exertion than is neceſſary for managing the details of ordinary buſineſs, to arrive at general theorems; which, when illuſtrated to the lower claſſes of men, in their particular applications, ſeem to indicate a fertility of invention, little ſhort of ſupernatural *.

THE

* " Toutes les opinions philoſophiques de M. Turgot formoient un ſyſtême " également vaſte et enchaîné dans toutes ſes parties. Souvent lorſqu'on agitoit " devant lui une queſtion particuliere d'adminiſtration de legiſlation, de juriſ- " prudence, on voyoit avec étonnement qu'il avoit ſur cette queſtion, non une " de ces opinions vagues fondées ſur un premier apperçu, inſpirées par une " eſpece d'inſtinct, qu'on adopte au hazard, et qu'on défend enſuite par vanité, " mais une opinion arrêtée qui ſe lioit d'elle meme à ſon ſyſtême général. Lui " parloit-on d'un abus, d'un déſordre, quel que fût le pays de l'Europe ou il " régnât, quelle que fût la branche de la legiſlation qu'il eût infectée, il con- " noiſſoit l'origine du mal, ſes effets, les cauſes qui en prolongeoient la durée " et

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THE analogy of the algebraical art may be of uſe in illuſtrating theſe obſervations. The difference, in fact, between the inveſtigations we carry on by its aſſiſtance, and other proceſſes of reaſoning, is more inconſiderable than is commonly imagined; and, if I am not miſtaken, amounts only to this, that the former are expreſſed in an appropriated language, with which we are not accuſtomed to aſſociate particular notions. Hence they exhibit the efficacy of ſigns as an inſtrument of thought in a more diſtinct and palpable manner, than the ſpeculations we carry on by words, which are continually awakening the power of Conception.

WHEN the celebrated Vieta ſhewed algebraiſts that, by ſubſtituting in their inveſtigations letters of the alphabet, inſtead of known quantities, they might render the ſolution of every problem ſubſervient to the diſcovery of a general truth, he did not increaſe the difficulty of algebraical reaſonings: he only enlarged the ſignification of the terms in which they were expreſſed. And if, in teaching that ſcience, it is found expedient to accuſtom ſtudents to ſolve problems by means of the particular numbers which are given, before they are made acquainted with literal or ſpecious arithmetic, it is not becauſe the former proceſſes are leſs intricate than the latter, but becauſe their ſcope and utility are more obvious, and becauſe it is

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" et les moyens de le détruire. On eût cru qu'il en avoit fait l'objet parti-
" culier de ſes réflexions s'il n'eût été facile de reconnoître l'application ſimple
" et naturelle de ſes principes généraux."

Vie de TURGOT, *par* CONDORCET, partie ii. p. 54.

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more eaſy to illuſtrate, by examples than by words, the difference between a particular concluſion, and a general theorem.

THE difference between the intellectual proceſſes of the vulgar and of the philoſopher, is perfectly analogous to that between the two ſtates of the algebraical art before and after the time of Vieta; the general terms which are uſed in the various ſciences, giving to thoſe who can employ them with correctneſs and dexterity, the ſame ſort of advantage over the uncultivated ſagacity of the bulk of mankind, which the expert algebraiſt poſſeſſes over the arithmetical accomptant.

IF the foregoing doctrine be admitted as juſt, it exhibits a view of the utility of language, which appears to me to be peculiarly ſtriking and beautiful; as it ſhews that the ſame faculties which, without the uſe of ſigns, muſt neceſſarily have been limited to the conſideration of individual objects and particular events, are, by means of ſigns, fitted to embrace, without effort, thoſe comprehenſive theorems, to the diſcovery of which, in detail, the united efforts of the whole human race would have been unequal. The advantage our animal ſtrength acquires by the uſe of mechanical engines, exhibits but a faint image of that increaſe of our intellectual capacity which we owe to language.—It is this increaſe of our natural powers of comprehenſion, which ſeems to be the principal foundation of the pleaſure we receive from the diſcovery of general theorems. Such a diſcovery gives us at once the command of an infinite variety of particular truths, and communicates to the mind a ſenti-

a ſentiment of its own power, not unlike to what we feel when we contemplate the magnitude of thoſe phyſical effects, of which we have acquired the command by our mechanical contrivances. CHAP IV.

It may perhaps appear, at firſt, to be a farther conſequence of the principles I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh, that the difficulty of philoſophical diſcoveries is much leſs than is commonly imagined; but the truth is, it only follows from them, that this difficulty is of a different nature from what we are apt to ſuppoſe, on a ſuperficial view of the ſubject. To employ, with ſkill, the very delicate inſtrument which nature has made eſſentially ſubſervient to general reaſoning, and to guard againſt the errors which reſult from an injudicious uſe of it, require an uncommon capacity of patient attention, and a cautious circumſpection in conducting our various intellectual proceſſes, which can only be acquired by early habits of philoſophical reflexion. To aſſiſt and direct us in making this acquiſition ought to form the moſt important branch of a rational logic; a ſcience of far more extenſive utility, and of which the principles lie much deeper in the philoſophy of the human mind, than the trifling art which is commonly dignified with that name. The branch in particular to which the foregoing obſervations more immediately relate, muſt for ever remain in its infancy, till a moſt difficult and important deſideratum in the hiſtory of the mind is ſupplied, by an explanation of the gradual ſteps by which it acquires the uſe of the various claſſes of words which compoſe the language of a cultivated and enlightened people. Of ſome of the errors in reaſoning to which we

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we are expoſed by an incautious uſe of words, I took notice in the preceding Section; and I ſhall have occaſion afterwards to treat the ſame ſubject more in detail in a ſubſequent part of my work.

SECTION VI.

Of the Errors to which we are liable in Speculation, and in the Conduct of Affairs, in conſequence of a raſh Application of general Principles.

IT appears ſufficiently from the reaſonings which I offered in the preceding Section, how important are the advantages which the philoſopher acquires, by quitting the ſtudy of particulars, and directing his attention to general principles. I flatter myſelf it appears farther, from the ſame reaſonings, that it is in conſequence of the uſe of language alone, that the human mind is rendered capable of theſe comprehenſive ſpeculations.

IN order, however, to proceed with ſafety in the uſe of general principles, much caution and addreſs are neceſſary, both in eſtabliſhing their truth, and in applying them to practice. Without a proper attention to the circumſtances by which their application to particular caſes muſt be modified, they will be a per-

a perpetual ſource of miſtake, and of diſappointment, in the conduct of affairs, however rigidly juſt they may be in themſelves, and however accurately we may reaſon from them. If our general principles happen to be falſe, they will involve us in errors, not only of conduct but of ſpeculation; and our errors will be the more numerous, the more comprehenſive the principles are on which we proceed.

To illuſtrate theſe obſervations fully, would lead to a minuteneſs of diſquiſition inconſiſtent with my general plan; and I ſhall therefore, at preſent, confine myſelf to ſuch remarks as appear to be of moſt eſſential importance.

And, in the firſt place, it is evidently impoſſible to eſtabliſh ſolid general principles, without the previous ſtudy of particulars: in other words, it is neceſſary to begin with the examination of individual objects, and individual events; in order to lay a ground-work for accurate claſſification, and for a juſt inveſtigation of the laws of nature. It is in this way only that we can expect to arrive at general principles, which may be ſafely relied on, as guides to the knowledge of particular truths: and unleſs our principles admit of ſuch a practical application, however beautiful they may appear to be in theory, they are of far leſs value than the limited acquiſitions of the vulgar. The truth of theſe remarks is now ſo univerſally admitted, and is indeed ſo obvious in itſelf, that it would be ſuperfluous to multiply words in ſupporting them; and I ſhould ſcarcely have thought of ſtating them in this Chapter, if ſome of the moſt celebrated philoſophers of antiquity had not been

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been led to diſpute them, in conſequence of the miſtaken opinions which they entertained concerning the nature of univerſals. Forgetting that *genera* and *ſpecies* are mere arbitrary creations which the human mind forms, by withdrawing the attention from the diſtinguiſhing qualities of objects, and giving a common name to their reſembling qualities, they conceived univerſals to be real exiſtences, or (as they expreſſed it) to be the eſſences of individuals; and flattered themſelves with the belief, that by directing their attention to theſe eſſences in the firſt inſtance, they might be enabled to penetrate the ſecrets of the univerſe, without ſubmitting to the ſtudy of nature in detail. Theſe errors, which were common to the Platoniſts and the Peripatetics, and which both of them ſeem to have adopted from the Pythagorean ſchool, contributed, perhaps more than any thing elſe, to retard the progreſs of the ancients in phyſical knowledge. The late learned Mr. Harris is almoſt the only author of the preſent age who has ventured to defend this plan of philoſophiſing, in oppoſition to that which has been ſo ſucceſsfully followed by the diſciples of lord Bacon.

"THE Platoniſts," ſays he, "conſidering ſcience as ſome-
"thing aſcertained, definite, and ſteady, would admit nothing
"to be its object which was vague, indefinite, and paſſing.
"For this reaſon they excluded all individuals or objects of
"ſenſe, and (as Ammonius expreſſes it) raiſed themſelves in
"their contemplations from beings particular to beings uni-
"verſal, and which, from their own nature, were eternal and
"definite."—"Conſonant to this was the advice of Plato, with
"reſpect to the progreſs of our ſpeculations and inquiries, to
"deſcend

" deſcend from thoſe higher genera, which include many ſub-
" ordinate ſpecies, down to the loweſt rank of ſpecies, thoſe
" which include only individuals. But here it was his opi-
" nion, that our enquiries ſhould ſtop, and, as to individuals,
" let them wholly alone; becauſe of theſe there could not
" poſſibly be any ſcience *."

" SUCH," continues this author, " was the method of an-
" cient philoſophy. The faſhion, at preſent, appears to be
" ſomewhat altered, and the buſineſs of philoſophers to be little
" elſe, than the collecting from every quarter, into voluminous
" records, an infinite number of ſenſible, particular, and un-
" connected facts, the chief effect of which is to excite our
" admiration."—In another part of his works the ſame author obſerves, that " the mind, truly wiſe, quitting the ſtudy of
" particulars, as knowing their multitude to be infinite and
" incomprehenſible, turns its intellectual eye to what is general
" and comprehenſive, and through generals learns to ſee, and
" recogniſe whatever exiſts †."

IF we abſtract from theſe obvious errors of the ancient philoſophers, with reſpect to the proper order to be obſerved in our inquiries, and only ſuppoſe them to end where the Platoniſts ſaid that they ſhould begin, the magnificent encomiums they beſtowed on the utility of thoſe comprehenſive truths which form the object of ſcience (making allowance for the obſcure and myſterious terms in which they expreſſed them) can ſcarcely be regarded as extravagant. It is probable that

* HARRIS's Three Treatiſes, pages 341, 342. † Ibid. page 227.

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from a few accidental inſtances of ſucceſsful inveſtigation, they had been ſtruck with the wonderful effect of general principles in increaſing the intellectual power of the human mind; and, miſled by that impatience in the ſtudy of particulars which is ſo often connected with the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior ability, they laboured to perſuade themſelves, that, by a life devoted to abſtract meditation, ſuch principles might be rendered as immediate objects of intellectual perception, as the individuals which compoſe the material world are of our external ſenſes. By connecting this opinion with their other doctrines concerning univerſals, they were unfortunately enabled to exhibit it in ſo myſterious a form, as not only to impoſe on themſelves, but to perplex the underſtandings of all the learned in Europe, for a long ſucceſſion of ages.

THE concluſion to which we are led by the foregoing obſervations is, that the foundation of all human knowledge muſt be laid in the examination of particular objects and particular facts; and that it is only in ſo far as our general principles are reſolvable into theſe primary elements, that they poſſeſs either truth or utility. It muſt not, however, be underſtood to be implied in this concluſion, that all our knowledge muſt ultimately reſt on our own proper experience. If this were the caſe, the progreſs of ſcience, and the progreſs of human improvement, muſt have been wonderfully retarded; for, if it had been neceſſary for each individual to form a claſſification of objects, in conſequence of obſervations and abſtractions of his own, and to infer from the actual examination of particular facts, the general truths on which his conduct proceeds; human

man affairs would at this day remain nearly in the ſame ſtate to which they were brought by the experience of the firſt generation. In fact, this is very nearly the ſituation of the ſpecies in all thoſe parts of the world, in which the exiſtence of the race depends on the ſeparate efforts which each individual makes, in procuring for himſelf the neceſſaries of life; and in which, of conſequence, the habits and acquirements of each individual muſt be the reſult of his own perſonal experience. In a cultivated ſociety, one of the firſt acquiſitions which children make, is the uſe of language; by which means they are familiariſed, from their earlieſt years, to the conſideration of claſſes of objects, and of general truths; and before that time of life at which the ſavage is poſſeſſed of the knowledge neceſſary for his own preſervation, are enabled to appropriate to themſelves the accumulated diſcoveries of ages.

NOTWITHSTANDING, however, the ſtationary condition in which the race muſt, of neceſſity, continue, prior to the ſeparation of arts and profeſſions; the natural diſpoſition of the mind to aſcend from particular truths to general concluſions, could not fail to lead individuals, even in the rudeſt ſtate of ſociety, to collect the reſults of their experience, for their own inſtruction and that of others. But, without the uſe of general terms, the only poſſible way of communicating ſuch concluſions, would be by means of ſome particular example, of which the general application was ſtriking and obvious. In other words, the wiſdom of ſuch ages will neceſſarily be expreſſed in the form of fables or parables, or in the ſtill ſimpler form of proverbial inſtances; and not in the ſcientific form of general

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maxims. In this way, undoubtedly, much uſeful inſtruction, both of a prudential and moral kind, might be conveyed: at the ſame time, it is obvious, that, while general truths continued to be expreſſed merely by particular exemplifications, they would afford little or no opportunity to one generation to improve on the ſpeculations of another; as no effort of the underſtanding could combine them together, or employ them as premiſes, in order to obtain other concluſions more remote and comprehenſive. For this purpoſe, it is abſolutely neceſſary that the ſcope or moral of the fable ſhould be ſeparated entirely from its acceſſory circumſtances, and ſtated in the form of a general propoſition.

FROM what has now been ſaid, it appears, how much the progreſs of human reaſon, which neceſſarily accompanies the progreſs of ſociety, is owing to the introduction of general terms, and to the uſe of general propoſitions. In conſequence of the gradual improvements which take place in language as an inſtrument of thought, the claſſifications both of things and facts with which the infant faculties of each ſucceſſive race are converſant, are more juſt and more comprehenſive than thoſe of their predeceſſors: the diſcoveries which in one age were confined to the ſtudious and enlightened few, becoming in the next the eſtabliſhed creed of the learned; and in the third, forming part of the elementary principles of education. Indeed, among thoſe who enjoy the advantages of early inſtruction, ſome of the moſt remote and wonderful concluſions of the human intellect, are, even in infancy, as completely familiariſed to the mind, as the moſt obvious phenomena which the material world exhibits to their ſenſes.

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If theſe remarks concerning the progreſs of human reaſon be juſt, they afford delightful proſpects with reſpect to the condition of mankind in future ages; as they point out a proviſion which nature has made for a gradual improvement in their intellectual capacities; an improvement to which it is impoſſible for imagination to fix any boundary. As I propoſe, however, afterwards, to conſider this ſubject fully, I ſhall content myſelf at preſent with mentioning the encouragement which theſe proſpects receive from what has already happened in mathematics and natural philoſophy; two ſciences, which furniſh a very ſtriking illuſtration of the principles I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh, and which juſtify the moſt ſanguine expectations we can form, of the advancement of all the other branches of our knowledge. In this laſt obſervation I have been anticipated by Mr. Condorcet, with the authority of whoſe name I am happy in being able to confirm ſome of the foregoing ſpeculations.

"To ſuch of my readers," (ſays he,) "as may be ſlow in admitting the poſſibility of this progreſſive improvement in "the human race, allow me to ſtate, as an example, the "hiſtory of that ſcience in which the advances of diſcovery are "the moſt certain, and in which they may be meaſured with "the greateſt preciſion. Thoſe elementary truths of geometry "and of aſtronomy which, in India and Egypt, formed an "occult ſcience, upon which an ambitious prieſthood founded "its influence, were become, in the times of Archimedes and "Hipparchus, the ſubjects of common education in the public "ſchools of Greece. In the laſt century, a few years of ſtudy

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" were ſufficient for comprehending all that Archimedes and " Hipparchus knew; and, at preſent, two years employed " under an able teacher, carry the ſtudent beyond thoſe " concluſions, which limited the inquiries of Leibnitz and of " Newton. Let any perſon reflect on theſe facts: let him " follow the immenſe chain which connects the inquiries of " Euler with thoſe of a Prieſt of Memphis; let him obſerve, " at each epoch, how genius outſtrips the preſent age, and how " it is overtaken by mediocrity in the next; he will perceive, " that nature has furniſhed us with the means of abridging and " facilitating our intellectual labour, and that there is no rea- " ſon for apprehending that ſuch ſimplifications can ever have " an end. He will perceive, that at the moment when a mul- " titude of particular ſolutions, and of inſulated facts, begin to " diſtract the attention, and to overcharge the memory, the " former gradually loſe themſelves in one general method, and " the latter unite in one general law; and that theſe gene- " raliſations continually ſucceeding one to another, like the " ſucceſſive multiplications of a number by itſelf, have no other " limit, than that infinity which the human faculties are unable " to comprehend *."

* See Note [M].

SECTION VII.

Continuation of the ſame Subject.——Differences in the Intellectual Characters of Individuals, ariſing from their different Habits of Abſtraction and Generaliſation.

IN mentioning as one of the principal effects of civiliſation, its tendency to familiariſe the mind to general terms and to general propoſitions, I did not mean to ſay, that this influence extends equally to all the claſſes of men in ſociety. On the contrary, it is evidently confined, in a great meaſure, to thoſe who receive a liberal education; while the minds of the lower orders, like thoſe of ſavages, are ſo habitually occupied about particular objects, and particular events, that, although they are ſometimes led, from imitation, to employ general expreſſions, the uſe which they make of them is much more the reſult of memory than judgment; and it is but ſeldom that they are able to comprehend fully, any proceſs of reaſoning in which they are involved.

IT is hardly neceſſary for me to remark, that this obſervation, with reſpect to the incapacity of the vulgar for general ſpeculations,

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lations, (like all obſervations of a ſimilar nature,) muſt be received with ſome reſtrictions. In ſuch a ſtate of ſociety as that in which we live, there is hardly any individual to be found, to whom ſome general terms, and ſome general truths, are not perfectly familiar; and, therefore, the foregoing concluſions are to be conſidered as deſcriptive of thoſe habits of thought alone, which are moſt prevalent in their mind. To abridge the labour of reaſoning, and of memory, by directing the attention to general principles, inſtead of particular truths, is the profeſſed aim of all philoſophy; and according as individuals have more or leſs of the philoſophic ſpirit, their habitual ſpeculations (whatever the nature of their purſuits may be) will relate to the former, or to the latter, of theſe objects.

THERE are, therefore, among the men who are accuſtomed to the exerciſe of their intellectual powers, two claſſes, whoſe habits of thought are remarkably diſtinguiſhed from each other; the one claſs comprehending what we commonly call men of buſineſs, or, more properly, men of detail; the other, men of abſtraction; or, in other words, philoſophers.

THE advantages which, in certain reſpects, the latter of theſe poſſeſs over the former, have been already pointed out; but it muſt not be ſuppoſed, that theſe advantages are always purchaſed without ſome inconvenience. As the ſolidity of our general principles depends on the accuracy of the particular obſervations into which they are ultimately reſolvable, ſo their utility

utility is to be eſtimated by the practical applications of which they admit: and it unfortunately happens, that the ſame turn of mind which is favourable to philoſophical purſuits, unleſs it be kept under proper regulation, is extremely apt to diſqualify us for applying our knowledge to uſe, in the exerciſe of the arts, and in the conduct of affairs.

In order to perceive the truth of theſe remarks, it is almoſt ſufficient to recollect, that as claſſification, and, of conſequence, general reaſoning, preſuppoſe the exerciſe of abſtraction; a natural diſpoſition to indulge in them, cannot fail to lead the mind to overlook the ſpecific differences of things, in attending to their common qualities. To ſucceed, however, in practice, a familiar and circumſtantial acquaintance with the particular objects which fall under our obſervation, is indiſpenſably neceſſary.

But, farther: As all general principles are founded on claſſifications which imply the exerciſe of abſtraction; it is neceſſary to regard them, in their practical applications, merely as approximations to the truth; the defects of which, muſt be ſupplied by habits acquired by perſonal experience. In conſidering, for example, the theory of the mechanical powers; it is uſual to ſimplify the objects of our conception, by abſtracting from friction, and from the weight of the different parts of which they are compoſed. Levers are conſidered as mathematical lines, perfectly inflexible; and ropes, as mathematical lines, perfectly flexible;—and by means of theſe, and ſimilar abſtractions, a ſubject, which is in itſelf extremely com-

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plicated, is brought within the reach of elementary geometry. In the theory of politics, we find it neceſſary to abſtract from many of the peculiarities which diſtinguiſh different forms of government from each other, and to reduce them to certain general claſſes, according to their prevailing tendency. Although all the governments we have ever ſeen, have had more or leſs of mixture in their compoſition, we reaſon concerning pure monarchies, pure ariſtocracies, and pure democracies, as if there really exiſted political eſtabliſhments correſponding to our definitions. Without ſuch a claſſification, it would be impoſſible for us to fix our attention, amidſt the multiplicity of particulars which the ſubject preſents to us, or to arrive at any general principles, which might ſerve to guide our inquiries in comparing different inſtitutions together.

It is for a ſimilar reaſon, that the ſpeculative farmer reduces the infinite variety of ſoils to a few general deſcriptions; the phyſician, the infinite variety of bodily conſtitutions to a few temperaments; and the moraliſt, the infinite variety of human characters to a few of the ruling principles of action.

Notwithstanding, however, the obvious advantages we derive from theſe claſſifications, and the general concluſions to which they lead; it is evidently impoſſible, that principles, which derived their origin from efforts of abſtraction, ſhould apply literally to practice; or, indeed, that they ſhould afford us any conſiderable aſſiſtance in conduct, without a certain degree of practical and experimental ſkill. Hence it is, that the mere

mere theoriſt ſo frequently expoſes himſelf, in real life, to the ridicule of men whom he deſpiſes; and, in the general eſtimation of the world, falls below the level of the common drudges in buſineſs and the arts. The walk, indeed, of theſe unenlightened practitioners, muſt neceſſarily be limited by their accidental opportunities of experience; but, ſo far as they go, they operate with facility and ſucceſs; while the merely ſpeculative philoſopher, although poſſeſſed of principles which enable him to approximate to the truth, in an infinite variety of untried caſes, and although he ſees, with pity, the narrow views of the multitude, and the ludicrous preteniions with which they frequently oppoſe their trifling ſucceſſes to his theoretical ſpeculations, finds himſelf perfectly at a loſs, when he is called upon, by the ſimpleſt occurrences of ordinary life, to carry his principles into execution. Hence the origin of that maxim, "which" (as Mr. Hume remarks) "has been ſo in-"duſtriouſly propagated by the dunces of every age, that a "man of genius is unfit for buſineſs."

In what conſiſts practical or experimental ſkill, it is not eaſy to explain completely; but, among other things, it obviouſly implies, a talent for minute and comprehenſive and rapid obſervation; a memory, at once retentive and ready; in order to preſent to us accurately, and without reflexion, our theoretical knowledge; a preſence of mind, not to be diſconcerted by unexpected occurrences; and, in ſome caſes, an uncommon degree of perfection in the external ſenſes, and in the mechanical capacities of the body. All theſe elements of practical ſkill, it is obvious, are to be acquired only by habits

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of active exertion, and by a familiar acquaintance with real occurrences; for, as all the practical principles of our nature, both intellectual and animal, have a reference to particulars, and not to generals, ſo it is in the active ſcenes of life alone, and amidſt the details of buſineſs, that they can be cultivated and improved.

THE remarks which have been already made, are ſufficient to illuſtrate the impoſſibility of acquiring a talent for buſineſs, or for any of the practical arts of life, without actual experience. They ſhew alſo, that mere experience, without theory, may qualify a man, in certain caſes, for diſtinguiſhing himſelf in both. It is not, however, to be imagined, that in this way individuals are to be formed for the uncommon, or for the important, ſituations of ſociety, or even for enriching the arts by new inventions; for, as their addreſs and dexterity are founded entirely on imitation, or derived from the leſſons which experience has ſuggeſted to them, they cannot poſſibly extend to new combinations of circumſtances. Mere experience, therefore, can, at beſt, prepare the mind for the ſubordinate departments of life; for conducting the eſtabliſhed routine of buſineſs, or for a ſervile repetition in the arts of common operations.

IN the character of Mr. George Grenville, which Mr. Burke introduced in his celebrated Speech on American Taxation, a lively picture is drawn of the inſufficiency of mere experience to qualify a man for new and untried ſituations in the adminiſtration of government. The obſervations he makes on this ſubject,

ſubject, are expreſſed with his uſual beauty and felicity of language; and are of ſo general a nature, that, with ſome trifling alterations, they may be extended to all the practical purſuits of life.

"MR. GRENVILLE was bred to the law, which is, in my "opinion, one of the firſt and nobleſt of human ſciences; a "ſcience which does more to quicken and invigorate the un- "derſtanding, than all the other kinds of learning put toge- "ther; but it is not apt, except in perſons very happily born, "to open and to liberaliſe the mind exactly in the ſame pro- "portion. Paſſing from that ſtudy, he did not go very largely "into the world, but plunged into buſineſs; I mean, into the "buſineſs of office, and the limited and fixed methods and forms "eſtabliſhed there. Much knowledge is to be had, un- "doubtedly, in that line; and there is no knowledge which is "not valuable. But it may be truly ſaid, that men, too much "converſant in office, are rarely minds of remarkable enlarge- "ment. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to "think the ſubſtance of buſineſs not to be much more im- "portant, than the forms in which it is conducted. Theſe "forms are adapted to ordinary occaſions; and, therefore, "perſons who are nurtured in office, do admirably well, as "long as things go on in their common order; but when the "high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new "and troubled ſcene is opened, and the file affords no prece- "dent, then it is, that a greater knowledge of mankind, and "a far more extenſive comprehenſion of things, is requiſite, "than ever office gave, or than office can ever give."

NOR

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NOR is it in new combinations of circumſtances alone, that general principles aſſiſt us in the conduct of affairs: they render the application of our practical ſkill more unerring, and more perfect. For, as general principles limit the utility of practical ſkill to ſupply the imperfections of theory, they diminiſh the number of caſes in which this ſkill is to be employed; and thus, at once, facilitate its improvement, wherever it is requiſite; and leſſen the errors to which it is liable, by contracting the field within which it is poſſible to commit them.

IT would appear then, that there are two oppoſite extremes into which men are apt to fall, in preparing themſelves for the duties of active life. The one ariſes from habits of abſtraction and generaliſation carried to an exceſs; the other from a minute, an excluſive, and an unenlightened attention to the objects and events which happen to fall under their actual experience.

IN a perfect ſyſtem of education, care ſhould be taken to guard againſt both extremes, and to unite habits of abſtraction with habits of buſineſs, in ſuch a manner as to enable men to conſider things, either in general, or in detail, as the occaſion may require. Whichever of theſe habits may happen to gain an undue aſcendant over the mind, it will neceſſarily produce a character limited in its powers, and fitted only for particular exertions. Hence ſome of the apparent inconſiſtencies which we may frequently remark in the intellectual capacities of the ſame perſon. One man, from an early indulgence

dulgence in abſtract ſpeculation, poſſeſſes a knowledge of general principles, and a talent for general reaſoning, united with a fluency and eloquence in the uſe of general terms, which ſeem, to the vulgar, to announce abilities fitted for any given ſituation in life: while, in the conduct of the ſimpleſt affairs, he exhibits every mark of irreſolution and incapacity. Another not only acts with propriety, and ſkill, in circumſtances which require a minute attention to details, but poſſeſſes an acuteneſs of reaſoning, and a facility of expreſſion on all ſubjects, in which nothing but what is particular is involved; while, on general topics, he is perfectly unable either to reaſon, or to judge. It is this laſt turn of mind, which I think we have, in moſt inſtances, in view, when we ſpeak of good ſenſe, or common ſenſe, in oppoſition to ſcience and philoſophy. Both philoſophy and good ſenſe imply the exerciſe of our reaſoning powers; and they differ from each other only, according as theſe powers are applied to particulars or to generals. It is on good ſenſe (in the acceptation in which I have now explained the term) that the ſucceſs of men in the inferior walks of life chiefly depends; but, that it does not always indicate a capacity for abſtract ſcience, or for general ſpeculation, or for able conduct in ſituations which require comprehenſive views, is matter even of vulgar remark.

ALTHOUGH, however, each of theſe defects has a tendency to limit the utility of the individuals in whom it is to be found, to certain ſtations in ſociety; no compariſon can be made, in point of original value, between the intellectual capacities of the two claſſes of men to which they characteriſtically belong. The

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The one is the defect of a vigorous, an ambitious, and a comprehenſive genius, improperly directed; the other, of an underſtanding, minute and circumſcribed in its views, timid in its exertions, and formed for ſervile imitation. Nor is the former defect, (however difficult it may be to remove it when confirmed by long habit,) by any means ſo incurable as the latter; for it ariſes, not from original conſtitution, but from ſome fault in early education, while every tendency to the oppoſite extreme is more or leſs characteriſtical of a mind, uſeful, indeed, in a high degree, when confined to its proper ſphere, but deſtined, by the hand that formed it, to borrow its lights from another.

As an additional proof of the natural ſuperiority which men of general views poſſeſs over the common drudges in buſineſs, it may be farther obſerved, that the habits of inattention incident to the former, ariſe in part from the little intereſt which they take in particular objects and particular occurrences, and are not wholly to be aſcribed to an incapacity of attention. When the mind has been long accuſtomed to the conſideration of claſſes of objects and of comprehenſive theorems, it cannot, without ſome degree of effort, deſcend to that humble walk of experience, or of action, in which the meaneſt of mankind are on a level with the greateſt. In important ſituations, accordingly, men of the moſt general views, are found not to be inferior to the vulgar in their attention to details; becauſe the objects and occurrences which ſuch ſituations preſent, raiſe their paſſions, and intereſt their curioſity, from the magnitude of the conſequences to which they lead.

WHEN

WHEN theoretical knowledge and practical ſkill are happily combined in the ſame perſon, the intellectual power of man appears in its full perfection; and fits him equally to conduct, with a maſterly hand, the details of ordinary buſineſs, and to contend ſucceſsfully with the untried difficulties of new and hazardous ſituations. In conducting the former, mere experience may frequently be a ſufficient guide, but experience and ſpeculation muſt be combined together to prepare us for the latter. "Expert men," ſays lord Bacon, "can execute and judge "of particulars one by one; but the general councils, and the "plots, and the marſhalling of affairs, come beſt from thoſe "that are learned."

SECTION VIII.

Continuation of the ſame Subject.——Uſe and Abuſe of general Principles in Politics.

THE foregoing remarks, on the dangers to be apprehended from a raſh application of general principles, hold equally with reſpect to moſt of the practical arts. Among theſe, however, there is one of far ſuperior dignity to the reſt; which, partly on account of its importance, and partly on account of ſome peculiarities in its nature, ſeems to be entitled to a more particular conſideration. The art I allude to, is that of Legiſlation; an art which differs from all others in ſome very eſſential

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reſpects; and to which, the reaſonings in the laſt Section muſt be applied with many reſtrictions.

BEFORE proceeding farther, it is neceſſary for me to premiſe, that it is chiefly in compliance with common language and common prejudices, that I am ſometimes led, in the following obſervations, to contraſt theory with experience. In the proper ſenſe of the word Theory, it is ſo far from ſtanding in oppoſition to experience, that it implies a knowledge of principles, of which the moſt extenſive experience alone could put us in poſſeſſion. Prior to the time of Lord Bacon, indeed, an acquaintance with facts was not conſidered as eſſential to the formation of theories; and from theſe ages, has deſcended to us, an indiſcriminate prejudice againſt general principles, even in thoſe caſes in which they have been fairly obtained in the way of induction.

BUT not to diſpute about words: there are plainly two ſets of political reaſoners; one of which conſider the actual inſtitutions of mankind as the only ſafe foundation for our concluſions, and think every plan of legiſlation chimerical, which is not copied from one which has already been realiſed; while the other apprehend that, in many caſes, we may reaſon ſafely *a priori* from the known principles of human nature, combined with the particular circumſtances of the times. The former are commonly underſtood as contending for experience in oppoſition to theory; the latter are accuſed of truſting to theories unſupported by experience: but it ought to be remembered, that the political theoriſt, if he proceeds cautiouſly and philoſophically,

ſophically, founds his concluſions ultimately on experience, no leſs than the political empiric;—as the aſtronomer, who predicts an eclipſe from his knowledge of the principles of the ſcience, reſts his expectation of the event, on facts which have been previouſly aſcertained by obſervation, no leſs than if he inferred it, without any reaſoning, from his knowledge of a cycle.

THERE is, indeed, a certain degree of practical ſkill which habits of buſineſs alone can give, and without which the moſt enlightened politician muſt always appear to diſadvantage when he attempts to carry his plans into execution. And as this ſkill is often (in conſequence of the ambiguity of language) denoted by the word Experience; while it is ſeldom poſſeſſed by thoſe men, who have moſt carefully ſtudied the theory of legiſlation; it has been very generally concluded, that politics is merely a matter of routine, in which philoſophy is rather an obſtacle to ſucceſs. The ſtateſman who has been formed among official details, is compared to the practical engineer; the ſpeculative legiſlator, to the theoretical mechanician who has paſſed his life among books and diagrams.——In order to aſcertain how far this opinion is juſt, it may be of uſe to compare the art of legiſlation with thoſe practical applications of mechanical principles, by which the oppoſers of political theories have ſo often endeavoured to illuſtrate their reaſonings.

IN the firſt place, then, it may be remarked, that the [illegible] to which we are liable, in the uſe of general mechanical principles, are owing, in moſt inſtances, to the effect which habits of abſtraction are apt to have, in withdrawing the atten-

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tion from thoſe applications of our knowledge, by which alone we can learn to correct the imperfections of theory. Such errors, therefore, are, in a peculiar degree, incident to men who have been led by natural taſte, or by early habits, to prefer the ſpeculations of the cloſet, to the buſtle of active life, and to the fatigue of minute and circumſtantial obſervation.

In politics, too, one ſpecies of principles is often miſapplied from an inattention to circumſtances; thoſe which are deduced from a few examples of particular governments, and which are occaſionally quoted as univerſal political axioms, which every wiſe legiſlator ought to aſſume as the ground-work of his reaſonings. But this abuſe of general principles ſhould by no means be aſcribed, like the abſurdities of the ſpeculative mechanician, to over-refinement, and the love of theory; for it ariſes from weakneſſes, which philoſophy alone can remedy; an unenlightened veneration for maxims which are ſuppoſed to have the ſanction of time in their favour, and a paſſive acquieſcence in received opinions.

There is another claſs of principles, from which political concluſions have ſometimes been deduced; and which, notwithſtanding the common prejudice againſt them, are a much ſurer foundation for our reaſonings: I allude, at preſent, to the principles which we obtain from an examination of the human conſtitution, and of the general laws which regulate the courſe of human affairs; principles, which are certainly the reſult of much more extenſive induction, than any of the inferences that can be drawn from the hiſtory of actual eſtabliſhments.

In

In applying, indeed, ſuch principles to practice, it is neceſſary (as well as in mechanics) to pay attention to the peculiarities of the caſe; but it is by no means neceſſary to pay the ſame ſcrupulous attention to minute circumſtances, which is eſſential in the mechanical arts, or in the management of private buſineſs. There is even a danger of dwelling too much on details, and of rendering the mind incapable of thoſe abſtract and comprehenſive views of human affairs, which can alone furniſh the ſtateſman with fixed and certain maxims for the regulation of his conduct. "When a man (ſays Mr. Hume) de-"liberates concerning his conduct in any *particular* affair, and "forms ſchemes in politics, trade, œconomy, or any buſineſs "in life, he never ought to draw his arguments too fine, or "connect too long a chain of conſequences together. Some-"thing is ſure to happen, that will diſconcert his reaſoning, and "produce an event different from what he expected. But "when we reaſon upon *general* ſubjects, one may juſtly affirm, "that our ſpeculations can ſcarce ever be too fine, provided "they are juſt; and that the difference betwixt a common "man and a man of genius, is chiefly ſeen in the ſhallowneſs "or depth of the principles upon which they proceed.—— "'Tis certain that general principles, however intricate they "may ſeem, muſt always, if they are juſt and ſound, prevail "in the general courſe of things, though they may fail in par-"ticular caſes; and it is the chief buſineſs of philoſophers to "regard the general courſe of things. I may add, that it is alſo the chief buſineſs of politicians; eſpecially in the do-"meſtic government of the ſtate, where the public good, which "is, or ought to be, their object, depends on the concurrence of "a mul-

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"a multitude of caſes, not, as in foreign politics, upon accidents, "and chances, and the caprices of a few perſons *."

II. The difficulties which, in the mechanical arts, limit the application of general principles, remain invariably the ſame from age to age: and whatever obſervations we have made on them in the courſe of our paſt experience, lay a ſure foundation for future practical ſkill; and ſupply, in ſo far as they reach, the defects of our theories. In the art of government, however, the practical difficulties which occur, are of a very different nature. They do not preſent to the ſtateſman, the ſame ſteady ſubject of examination, which the effects of friction do to the engineer. They ariſe chiefly from the paſſions and opinions of men, which are in a ſtate of perpetual change: and, therefore, the addreſs which is neceſſary to overcome them, depends leſs on the accuracy of our obſervations with reſpect to the paſt, than on the ſagacity of our conjectures with reſpect to the future. In the preſent age, more particularly, when the rapid communication, and the univerſal diffuſion of knowledge, by means of the preſs, render the ſituation of political ſocieties eſſentially different from what it ever was formerly, and ſecure infallibly, againſt every accident, the progreſs of human reaſon; we may venture to predict, that they are to be the moſt ſucceſsful ſtateſmen, who, paying all due regard to paſt experience, ſearch for the rules of their co[illegible] be in- [illegible] chiefly in the peculiar circumſtances of their own times, a[illegible] the an enlightened anticipation of the future hiſtory of mankind. [illegible] ent

* Political Diſcourſes.

III. In

III. In the mechanical arts, if, at any time, we are at a loſs about the certainty of a particular fact, we have it always in our power to bring it to the teſt of experiment. But it is very ſeldom that we can obtain in this way any uſeful concluſion in politics: not only becauſe it is difficult to find two caſes in which the combinations of circumſtances are preciſely the ſame, but becauſe our acquaintance with the political experience of mankind is much more imperfect than is commonly imagined. By far the greater part of what is called matter of fact in politics, is nothing elſe than theory; and, very frequently, in this ſcience, when we think we are oppoſing experience to ſpeculation, we are only oppoſing one theory to another.

To be ſatisfied of the truth of this obſervation, it is almoſt ſufficient to recollect how extremely difficult it is to convey, by a general deſcription, a juſt idea of the actual ſtate of any government. That every ſuch deſcription muſt neceſſarily be more or leſs theoretical, will appear from the following remarks.

1. Of the governments which have hitherto appeared in the hiſtory of mankind, few or none have taken their riſe from political wiſdom, but have been the gradual reſult of time and experience, of circumſtances and emergencies. In proceſs of time, indeed, every government acquires a ſyſtematical appearance: for, although its different parts aroſe from circumſtances which may be regarded as accidental and irregular; yet there muſt exiſt, among theſe parts, a certain degree of conſiſtency and analogy. Wherever a government has exiſted for ages, and men have enjoyed tranquillity under it, it is a proof that its principles are not eſſentially at variance with each other.

Every

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Every new inſtitution which was introduced, muſt have had a certain reference to the laws and uſages exiſting before, otherwiſe it could not have been permanent in its operation. If any one, contrary to the ſpirit of the reſt, ſhould have occaſionally mingled with them, it muſt have ſoon fallen into deſuetude and oblivion; and thoſe alone would remain, which accorded in their general tendency. "Quæ uſu obtinuere," ſays Lord Bacon, "ſi non bona, at ſaltem apta inter ſe ſunt."

THE neceſſity of ſtudying particular conſtitutions of government, by the help of ſyſtematical deſcriptions of them, (ſuch deſcriptions, for example, as are given of that of England by Monteſquieu and Blackſtone,) ariſes from the ſame circumſtances, which render it expedient, in moſt inſtances, to ſtudy particular languages, by conſulting the writings of grammarians. In both caſes, the knowledge we wiſh to acquire, comprehends an infinite number of particulars, the conſideration of which, in detail, would diſtract the attention, and overload the memory. The ſyſtematical deſcriptions of politicians, like the general rules of grammarians, are in a high degree uſeful, for arranging, and ſimplifying, the objects of our ſtudy; but in both caſes, we muſt remember, that the knowledge we acquire in this manner, is to be received with great limitations, and that it is no more poſſible to convey, in a ſyſtematical form, a juſt and complete view of particular government, than it is to teach a language completely by means of general rules, without any practical aſſiſtance from reading or converſation.

2. THE nature and ſpirit of a government, as it is actually exerciſed at a particular period, cannot always be collected;

perhaps it can ſeldom be collected from an examination of written laws, or of the eſtabliſhed forms of a conſtitution. Theſe may continue the ſame for a long courſe of ages, while the government may be modified in its exerciſe, to a great extent, by gradual and undeſcribable alterations in the ideas, manners, and character, of the people; or by a change in the relations which different orders of the community bear to each other. In every country whatever, beſide the eſtabliſhed laws, the political ſtate of the people is affected by an infinite variety of circumſtances, of which no words can convey a conception, and which are to be collected only from actual obſervation. Even in this way, it is not eaſy for a perſon who has received his education in one country, to ſtudy the government of another; on account of the difficulty which he muſt neceſſarily experience, in entering into the aſſociations which influence the mind under a different ſyſtem of manners, and in aſcertaining (eſpecially upon political ſubjects) the complex ideas conveyed by a foreign language.

In conſequence of the cauſes which have now been mentioned, it ſometimes happens, that there are eſſential circumſtances in the actual ſtate of a government, about which the conſtitutional laws are not only ſilent, but which are directly contrary to all the written laws, and to the ſpirit of the conſtitution as delineated by theoretical writers.

IV. The art of government differs from the mechanical arts in this, that, in the former, it is much more difficult to refer effects to their cauſes, than in the latter; and, of conſequence,

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it rarely happens, even when we have an opportunity of ſeeing a political experiment made, that we can draw from it any certain inference, with reſpect to the juſtneſs of the principles by which it was ſuggeſted. In thoſe complicated machines, to which the ſtructure of civil ſociety has been frequently compared, as all the different parts of which they are compoſed are ſubjected to phyſical laws, the errors of the artiſt muſt neceſſarily become apparent in the laſt reſult; but in the political ſyſtem, as well as in the animal body, where the general conſtitution is ſound and healthy, there is a ſort of *vis medicatrix*, which is ſufficient for the cure of partial diſorders; and in the one caſe, as well as in the other, the errors of human art are frequently corrected and concealed by the wiſdom of nature. Among the many falſe eſtimates which we daily make of human ability, there is perhaps none more groundleſs than the exaggerated conceptions we are apt to form of that ſpecies of political wiſdom, which is ſuppoſed to be the fruit of long experience and of profeſſional habits. "Go;" (ſaid the chancellor Oxenſtiern to his ſon, when he was ſending him to a congreſs of ambaſſadors, and when the young man was expreſſing his diffidence of his own abilities for ſuch an employment;) "Go, and ſee with your own eyes, *Quam parva "ſapientia regitur mundus!*" The truth is, (however paradoxical the remark may appear at firſt view,) that the ſpeculative errors of ſtateſmen are frequently leſs ſenſible in their effects, and, of conſequence, more likely to eſcape without detection, than thoſe of individuals who occupy inferior ſtations in ſociety. The effects of miſconduct in private life, are eaſily traced to their proper ſource, and therefore the world is ſeldom far

far wrong in the judgments which it forms of the prudence or of the imprudence of private characters. But in conſidering the affairs of a great nation, it is ſo difficult to trace events to their proper cauſes, and to diſtinguiſh the effects of political wiſdom, from thoſe which are the natural reſult of the ſituation of the people, that it is ſcarcely poſſible, excepting in the caſe of a very long adminiſtration, to appretiate the talents of a ſtateſman from the ſucceſs or the failure of his meaſures. In every ſociety, too, which, in conſequence of the general ſpirit of its government, enjoys the bleſſings of tranquillity and liberty, a great part of the political order which we are apt to aſcribe to legiſlative ſagacity, is the natural reſult of the ſelfiſh purſuits of individuals; nay, in every ſuch ſociety, (as I already hinted,) the natural tendency to improvement is ſo ſtrong, as to overcome many powerful obſtacles, which the imperfection of human inſtitutions oppoſes to its progreſs.

FROM theſe remarks, it ſeems to follow, that, although in the mechanical arts, the errors of theory may frequently be corrected by repeated trials, without having recourſe to general principles; yet, in the machine of government, there is ſo great a variety of powers at work, beſide the influence of the ſtateſman, that it is vain to expect the art of legiſlation ſhould be carried to its greateſt poſſible perfection by experience alone.

STILL, however, it may be ſaid, that in the moſt imperfect governments of modern Europe, we have an experimental

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proof, that they ſecure, to a very great degree, the principal objects of the ſocial union. Why hazard theſe certain advantages, for the uncertain effects of changes, ſuggeſted by mere theory; and not reſt ſatisfied with a meaſure of political happineſs, which appears, from the hiſtory of the world, to be greater than has commonly fallen to the lot of nations?

WITH thoſe who would carry their zeal againſt reformation ſo far, it is impoſſible to argue: and it only remains for us to regret, that the number of ſuch reaſoners has, in all ages of the world, been ſo great, and their influence on human affairs ſo extenſive.

"THERE are ſome men," (ſays Dr. Johnſon,) "of narrow "views, and grovelling conceptions, who, without the inſti- "gation of perſonal malice, treat every new attempt as wild "and chimerical; and look upon every endeavour to depart "from the beaten track, as the raſh effort of a warm imagina- "tion, or the glittering ſpeculation of an exalted mind, that "may pleaſe and dazzle for a time, but can produce no real "or laſting advantage.

"THESE men value themſelves upon a perpetual ſcepticiſm; "upon believing nothing but their own ſenſes; upon calling "for demonſtration where it cannot poſſibly be obtained; and, "ſometimes, upon holding out againſt it when it is laid before "them; upon inventing arguments againſt the ſucceſs of any "new undertaking; and, where arguments cannot be found, "upon treating it with contempt and ridicule.

"SUCH

" SUCH have been the moſt formidable enemies of the great " benefactors of the world; for their notions and diſcourſe are " ſo agreeable to the lazy, the envious, and the timorous, that " they ſeldom fail of becoming popular, and directing the opi- " nions of mankind *."

WITH reſpect to this ſceptical diſpoſition, as applicable to the preſent ſtate of ſociety, it is of importance to add, that, in every government, the ſtability and the influence of eſtabliſhed authority, muſt depend on the coincidence between its meaſures and the tide of public opinion; and that, in modern Europe, in conſequence of the invention of printing, and the liberty of the preſs, public opinion has acquired an aſcendant in human affairs, which it never poſſeſſed in thoſe ſtates of antiquity from which moſt of our political examples are drawn. The danger, indeed, of ſudden and raſh innovations cannot be too ſtrongly inculcated; and the views of thoſe men who are forward to promote them, cannot be reprobated with too great ſeverity. But it is poſſible alſo to fall into the oppoſite extreme; and to bring upon ſociety the very evils we are anxious to prevent, by an obſtinate oppoſition to thoſe gradual and neceſſary reformations which the genius of the times demands. The violent revolutions which, at different periods, have convulſed modern Europe, have ariſen, not from a ſpirit of innovation in ſovereigns and ſtateſmen; but from their bigotted attachment to antiquated forms, and to principles borrowed from leſs enlightened ages. It is this reverence for abuſes which have been

* Life of DRAKE, by Dr. JOHNSON

ſanctioned

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ſanctioned by time, accompanied with an inattention to the progreſs of public opinion, which has, in moſt inſtances, blinded the rulers of mankind, till government has loſt all its efficiency; and till the rage of innovation has become too general and too violent, to be ſatisfied with changes, which, if propoſed at an earlier period, would have united, in the ſupport of eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, every friend to order, and to the proſperity of his country.

THESE obſervations I ſtate with the greater confidence, that the ſubſtance of them is contained in the following aphoriſms of Lord Bacon; a philoſopher who (if we except, perhaps, the late Mr. Turgot) ſeems, more than any other, to have formed enlightened views with reſpect to the poſſible attainments of mankind; and whoſe fame cannot fail to increaſe as the world grows older, by being attached, not to a particular ſyſtem of variable opinions, but to the general and infallible progreſs of human reaſon.

" Quis novator tempus imitatur, quod novationes ita in-
" ſinuat, ut ſenſus fallant?

" Novator maximus tempus; quidni igitur tempus imi-
" temur?

" Moroſa morum retentio, res turbulenta eſt, æque ac no-
" vitas.

" Cum per ſe res mutentur in deterius, ſi conſilio in melius
" non mutentur, quis finis erit mali?"

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THE general concluſion to which theſe obſervations lead, is ſufficiently obvious; that the perfection of political wiſdom does not conſiſt in an indiſcriminate zeal againſt reforms, but in a gradual and prudent accommodation of eſtabliſhed inſtitutions to the varying opinions, manners, and circumſtances of mankind. In the actual application, however, of this principle, many difficulties occur, which it requires a very rare combination of talents to ſurmount: more particularly in the preſent age; when the preſs has, to ſo wonderful a degree, emancipated human reaſon from the tyranny of antient prejudices; and has roufed a ſpirit of free diſcuſſion, unexampled in the hiſtory of former times.

THAT this ſudden change in the ſtate of the world, ſhould be accompanied with ſome temporary diſorders, is by no means ſurpriſing. While the multitude continue imperfectly enlightened, they will be occaſionally miſled by the artifices of demagogues; and even good men, intoxicated with ideas of theoretical perfection, may be expected, ſometimes, to ſacrifice, unintentionally, the tranquillity of their cotemporaries, to an over-ardent zeal for the good of poſterity. Notwithſtanding, however, theſe evils, which every friend to humanity muſt lament, I would willingly believe, that the final effects reſulting from this ſpirit of reformation, cannot fail to be favourable to human happineſs; and there are ſome peculiarities in the preſent condition of mankind, which appear to me to juſtify more ſanguine hopes upon the ſubject, than it would have been reaſonable for a philoſopher to indulge at any former period. An attention to theſe peculiarities is abſolutely neceſſary, to enable

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us to form a competent judgment on the queſtion to which the foregoing obſervations relate; and it leads to the illuſtration of a doctrine to which I have frequently referred in this work; the gradual improvement in the condition of the ſpecies, which may be expected from the progreſs of reaſon and the diffuſion of knowledge.

AMONG the many circumſtances favourable to human happineſs in the preſent ſtate of the world, the moſt important, perhaps, is, that the ſame events which have contributed to looſen the foundations of the antient fabrics of deſpotiſm, have made it practicable, in a much greater degree than it ever was formerly, to reduce the principles of legiſlation to a ſcience, and to anticipate the probable courſe of popular opinions. It is eaſy for the ſtateſman to form to himſelf a diſtinct and ſteady idea of the ultimate objects at which a wiſe legiſlator ought to aim, and to foreſee that modification of the ſocial order, to which human affairs have, of themſelves, a tendency to approach; and, therefore, his practical ſagacity and addreſs are limited to the care of accompliſhing the important ends which he has in view, as effectually and as rapidly as is conſiſtent with the quiet of individuals, and with the rights ariſing from actual eſtabliſhments.

IN order to lay a ſolid foundation for the ſcience of politics, the firſt ſtep ought to be, to aſcertain that form of ſociety which is perfectly agreeable to nature and to juſtice; and what are the principles of legiſlation neceſſary for maintaining it. Nor is the inquiry ſo difficult as might at firſt be apprehended; for it

might be eaſily ſhewn, that the greater part of the political diſ- CHAP IV.
orders which exiſt among mankind, do not ariſe from a want of foreſight in politicians, which has rendered their laws too general, but from their having truſted too little to the operation of thoſe ſimple inſtitutions which nature and juſtice recommend; and, of conſequence, that, as ſociety advances to its perfection, the number of laws may be expected to diminiſh, inſtead of increaſing, and the ſcience of legiſlation to be gradually ſimpliſied.

THE œconomical ſyſtem which, about thirty years ago, employed the ſpeculations of ſome ingenious men in France, ſeems to me to have been the firſt attempt to aſcertain this ideal perfection of the ſocial order; and the light which, ſince that period, has been thrown on the ſubject, in different parts of Europe, is a proof of what the human mind is able to accompliſh in ſuch inquiries, when it has once received a proper direction. To all the various tenets of theſe writers, I would, by no means, be underſtood to ſubſcribe; nor do I conſider their ſyſtem as ſo perfect in every different part, as ſome of its more ſanguine admirers have repreſented it to be. A few of the moſt important principles of political œconomy, they have undoubtedly eſtabliſhed with demonſtrative evidence; but what the world is chiefly indebted to them for, is, the commencement which they have given to a new branch of ſcience, and the plan of inveſtigation which they have exhibited to their ſucceſſors. A ſhort account of what I conceive to be the ſcope of their ſpeculations, will juſtify theſe remarks, and will comprehend every thing which I have to offer at preſent, in anſwer to the queſtion by

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which they were ſuggeſted. Such an account I attempt with the greater ſatisfaction, that the leading views of the earlieſt and moſt enlightened patrons of the œconomical ſyſtem have, in my opinion, been not more miſrepreſented by its opponents, than miſapprehended by ſome who have adopted its concluſions *.

In the firſt place, then, I think it of importance to remark, that the object of the œconomical ſyſtem ought by no means to be confounded (as I believe it commonly is in this country) with that of the Utopian plans of government, which have, at different times, been offered to the world; and which have ſo often excited the juſt ridicule of the more ſober and reaſonable inquirers. Of theſe plans, by far the greater number proceed on the ſuppoſition, that the ſocial order is entirely the effect of human art; and that wherever this order is imperfect, the evil may be traced to ſome want of foreſight on the part of the legiſlator; or to ſome inattention of the magiſtrate to the complicated ſtructure of that machine of which he regulates the movements. The projects of reform, therefore, which ſuch plans involve, are, in general, well entitled to all the ridicule and contempt they have met with; inaſmuch as they imply an arrogant and preſumptuous belief in their authors, of the ſuperiority of their own political ſagacity, to the accumulated wiſdom of former ages. The caſe is very different with the œconomical ſyſtem; of which the leading views (ſo far as I am able to judge) proceed on the two following ſuppoſitions: Firſt, that the ſocial order is, in the moſt eſſential reſpects, the reſult

* See Note [N].

of

of the wiſdom of nature, and not of human contrivance; and, therefore, that the proper buſineſs of the politician, is not to divide his attention among all the different parts of a machine, which is by far too complicated for his comprehenſion; but by protecting the rights of individuals, and by allowing to each, as complete a liberty as is compatible with the perfect ſecurity of the rights of his fellow-citizens; to remove every obſtacle which the prejudices and vices of men have oppoſed to the eſtabliſhment of that order which ſociety has a tendency to aſſume. Secondly; that, in proportion to the progreſs and the diffuſion of knowledge, thoſe prejudices, on a ſkilful management of which, all the old ſyſtems of policy proceeded, muſt gradually diſappear; and, conſequently, that (whatever may be his predilection for antient uſages) the inevitable courſe of events impoſes on the politician the neceſſity of forming his meaſures on more ſolid and permanent principles, than thoſe by which the world has hitherto been governed. Both of theſe ſuppoſitions are of modern origin. The former, ſo far as I know, was firſt ſtated and illuſtrated by the French Oeconomiſts. The latter has been obviouſly ſuggeſted by that rapid improvement which has actually taken place in every country of Europe where the preſs has enjoyed a moderate degree of liberty.

It may be farther remarked, with reſpect to the greater part of the plans propoſed by Utopian projectors, that they proceed on the ſuppoſition of a miraculous reformation in the moral character of a people, to be effected by ſome new ſyſtem of education. All ſuch plans (as Mr. Hume has juſtly obſerved)

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may be ſafely abandoned as impracticable and viſionary. But this objection does not apply to the œconomical ſyſtem; the chief expedient of which, for promoting moral improvement, is not that education which depends on the attention and care of our inſtructors; but an education which neceſſarily reſults from the political order of ſociety. "How ineffectual" (ſaid the Roman poet) "are the wiſeſt laws, if they be not "ſupported by good morals!" How ineffectual (ſay the Oeconomiſts) are all our efforts to preſerve the morals of a people, if the laws which regulate the political order, doom the one half of mankind to indigence, to fraud, to ſervility, to ignorance, to ſuperſtition; and the other half to be the ſlaves of all the follies and vices which reſult from the inſolence of rank, and the ſelfiſhneſs of opulence? Suppoſe for a moment, that the inordinate accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals, which we every where meet with in modern Europe, were gradually diminiſhed by aboliſhing the law of entails, and by eſtabliſhing a perfect freedom of commerce and of induſtry; it is almoſt ſelf-evident, that this ſimple alteration in the order of ſociety; an alteration which has been often demonſtrated to be the moſt effectual and the moſt infallible meaſure for promoting the wealth and population of a country; would contribute, more than all the labours of moraliſts, to ſecure the virtue and the happineſs of all the claſſes of mankind. It is worthy too of remark, that ſuch a plan of reformation does not require, for its accompliſhment, any new and complicated inſtitutions; and therefore does not proceed upon any exaggerated conception of the efficacy of human policy. On the contrary, it requires only (like moſt of the other

other expedients propoſed by this ſyſtem) the gradual abolition of thoſe arbitrary and unjuſt arrangements, by which the order of nature is diſturbed.

ANOTHER miſtaken idea concerning the œconomical ſyſtem is, that it is founded entirely upon theory, and unſupported by facts. That this may be the caſe with reſpect to ſome of its doctrines, I ſhall not diſpute: but, in general, it may be ſafely affirmed, that they reſt on a broader baſis of facts, than any other political ſpeculations which have been yet offered to the world; for they are founded, not on a few examples collected from the ſmall number of governments of which we poſſeſs an accurate knowledge; but on thoſe laws of human nature, and thoſe maxims of common ſenſe, which are daily verified in the intercourſe of private life.

OF thoſe who have ſpeculated on the ſubject of legiſlation, by far the greater part ſeem to have conſidered it as a ſcience *ſui generis;* the firſt principles of which can be obtained in no other way, than by an examination of the conduct of mankind in their political capacity. The Occonomiſts, on the contrary, have ſearched for the cauſes of national proſperity, and national improvement, in thoſe arrangements, which our daily obſervations ſhew to be favourable to the proſperity and to the improvement of individuals. The former reſemble thoſe philoſophers of antiquity, who, affirming, that the phenomena of the heavens are regulated by laws peculiar to themſelves, diſcouraged every attempt to inveſtigate their phyſical cauſes, which was founded upon facts collected from common experience.

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rience. The latter have aimed at accompliſhing a reformation in politics, ſimilar to what Kepler and Newton accompliſhed in aſtronomy; and, by ſubjecting to that common ſenſe, which guides mankind in their private concerns, thoſe queſtions, of which none were ſuppoſed to be competent judges, but men initiated in the myſteries of government, have given a beginning to a ſcience which has already extended very widely our political proſpects; and which, in its progreſs, may probably afford an illuſtration, not leſs ſtriking than that which phyſical aſtronomy exhibits, of the ſimplicity of thoſe laws by which the univerſe is governed.

When a political writer, in order to expoſe the folly of thoſe commercial regulations which aim at the encouragement of domeſtic induſtry by reſtraints on importation, appeals to the maxims upon which men act in private life; when he remarks, that the taylor does not attempt to make his own ſhoes, but buys them of the ſhoemaker; that the ſhoemaker does not attempt to make his own clothes, but employs a taylor; and when he concludes, that what is prudence in the conduct of every private family, can ſcarcely be folly in that of a great kingdom*; he may undoubtedly be ſaid, in one ſenſe, to indulge in theory; as he calls in queſtion the utility of inſtitutions which appear, from the fact, to be not incompatible with a certain degree of political proſperity. But, in another ſenſe, and in a much more philoſophical one, he may be ſaid to oppoſe to

* See Mr. Smith's profound and original "Inquiry into the Nature and Cauſes of the Wealth of Nations."

the

the falſe theories of ſtateſmen, the common ſenſe of mankind; and thoſe maxims of expediency, of which every man may verify the truth by his own daily obſervation.

THERE is yet another miſtake (of ſtill greater conſequence, perhaps, than any of thoſe I have mentioned), which has miſled moſt of the opponents, and even ſome of the friends, of the œconomical ſyſtem; an idea that it was meant to exhibit a political order, which is really attainable in the preſent ſtate of Europe. So different from this were the views of its moſt enlightened advocates, that they have uniformly reſted their only hopes of its gradual eſtabliſhment in the world, on that influence in the conduct of human affairs, which philoſophy may be expected gradually to acquire, in conſequence of the progreſs of reaſon and civiliſation. To ſuppoſe that a period is ever to arrive, when it ſhall be realiſed in its full extent, would be the height of enthuſiaſm and abſurdity; but it is ſurely neither enthuſiaſm nor abſurdity to affirm, that governments are more or leſs perfect, in proportion to the greater or ſmaller number of individuals to whom they afford the means of cultivating their intellectual and moral powers, and whom they admit to live together on a liberal footing of equality;—or even to expect, that, in proportion to the progreſs of reaſon, governments will actually approach nearer and nearer to this deſcription.

To delineate that ſtate of political ſociety to which governments may be expected to approach nearer and nearer as the triumphs of philoſophy extend, was, I apprehend, the leading object

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object of the earlieſt and moſt enlightened patrons of the œconomical ſyſtem. It is a ſtate of ſociety, which they by no means intended to recommend to particular communities, as the moſt eligible they could adopt at preſent; but as an ideal order of things, to which they have a tendency of themſelves to approach, and to which it ought to be the aim of the legiſlator to facilitate their progreſs. In the language of mathematicians, it forms a *limit* to the progreſſive improvement of the political order; and, in the mean time, it exhibits a ſtandard of compariſon, by which the excellence of particular inſtitutions may be eſtimated.

ACCORDING to the view which has now been given of the œconomical ſyſtem, its principles appear highly favourable to the tranquillity of ſociety; inaſmuch as, by inſpiring us with a confidence in the triumph which truth and liberty muſt infallibly gain in the end over error and injuſtice, it has a tendency to diſcourage every plan of innovation which is to be ſupported by violence and bloodſhed. And, accordingly, ſuch has always been the language of thoſe who were beſt acquainted with the views of its authors. "If we attack oppreſſors, "before we have taught the oppreſſed," (ſays one of the ableſt of its preſent ſupporters *,) "we ſhall riſk the loſs "of liberty, and rouſe them to oppoſe the progreſs of reaſon. "Hiſtory affords proofs of this truth. How often, in ſpite "of the efforts of the friends of freedom, has the event of a "ſingle battle reduced nations to the ſlavery of ages!

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" AND what is the kind of liberty enjoyed by thoſe nations, " which have recovered it by force of arms, and not by the " influence of philoſophy? Have not moſt of them confounded " the forms of republicaniſm with the enjoyment of right, and " the deſpotiſm of numbers with liberty? How many laws, " contrary to the rights of nature, have diſhonoured the code " of every people which has recovered its freedom, during " thoſe ages in which reaſon was ſtill in its infancy!"

" WHY not profit by this fatal experience, and wiſely wait " the progreſs of knowledge, in order to obtain freedom more " effectual, more ſubſtantial, and more peaceful? Why purſue " it by blood and inevitable confuſion, and truſt that to chance, " which time muſt certainly, and without bloodſhed, beſtow? " A fortunate ſtruggle may, indeed, relieve us of many " grievances under which we labour at preſent, but if we " wiſh to ſecure the perfection, and the permanence of free- " dom, we muſt patiently wait the period when men, emanci- " pated from their prejudices, and guided by philoſophy, " ſhall be rendered worthy of liberty, by comprehending its " claims."

NOR is it the employment of violent and ſanguinary means alone, in order to accompliſh political innovations, that this enlightened and humane philoſophy has a tendency to diſcourage. By extending our views to the whole plan of civil ſociety, and ſhewing us the mutual relations and dependencies of its moſt diſtant parts, it cannot fail to check that indiſcriminate zeal againſt eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, which ariſes from

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partial views of the ſocial ſyſtem; as well as to produce a certain degree of ſcepticiſm with reſpect to every change, the ſucceſs of which is not inſured by the prevailing ideas and manners of the age. Sanguine and inconſiderate projects of reformation are frequently the offspring of clear and argumentative and ſyſtematical underſtandings; but rarely of comprehenſive minds. For checking them, indeed, nothing is ſo effectual, as a general ſurvey of the complicated ſtructure of ſociety. Even although ſuch a ſurvey ſhould be ſuperficial, provided it be conducted on an extenſive ſcale, it is more uſeful, at leaſt, for this purpoſe, than the moſt minute and ſucceſsful inquiries, which are circumſcribed within a narrow circle. If it ſhould teach us nothing elſe, it will at leaſt ſatisfy us of the extreme difficulty of predicting, with confidence, the remote effects of new arrangements; and that the perfection of political wiſdom conſiſts, not in incumbering the machine of government with new contrivances to obviate every partial inconvenience, but in removing gradually, and imperceptibly, the obſtacles which diſturb the order of nature, and (as Mr. Addiſon ſomewhere expreſſes it) "in grafting upon her inſtitutions."

WHEN the œconomical ſyſtem, indeed, is firſt preſented to the mind, and when we compare the perfection which it exhibits, with the actual ſtate of human affairs, it is by no means unnatural, that it ſhould ſuggeſt plans of reformation too violent and ſudden to be practicable. A more complete acquaintance, however, with the ſubject, will effectually cure theſe firſt impreſſions, by pointing out to us the miſchiefs to be apprehended from an injudicious combination of theoretical perfection with our

our eſtabliſhed laws, prejudices, and manners. As the various unnatural modes and habits of living, to which the bodily conſtitution is gradually reconciled by a courſe of luxurious indulgences, have ſuch a tendency to correct each other's effects, as to render a partial return to a more ſimple regimen, a dangerous, and, ſometimes, a fatal experiment; ſo it is poſſible, that many of our imperfect political inſtitutions may be ſo accommodated to each other, that a partial execution of the moſt plauſible and equitable plans of reformation, might tend, in the firſt inſtance, to fruſtrate thoſe important purpoſes which we are anxious to promote. Is it not poſſible, for example, that the influence which is founded on a reſpect for hereditary rank, may have its uſe in counteracting that ariſtocracy which ariſes from inequality of wealth; and which ſo many laws and prejudices conſpire to ſupport? That the former ſpecies of influence is rapidly declining of itſelf, in conſequence of the progreſs which commerce and philoſophy have already made, is ſufficiently obvious; and, I think, it may reaſonably be doubted, whether a well-wiſher to mankind would be diſpoſed to accelerate its deſtruction, till the true principles of political œconomy are completely underſtood and acknowledged by the world.

VARIOUS other examples might be produced, to illuſtrate the dangers to be apprehended from the partial influence of general principles in politics; or, in other words, from an excluſive attention to particular circumſtances in the political order, without comprehenſive views of the ſubject. It is only upon a limited mind, therefore, that ſuch ſtudies will produce a paſſion for violent innovations. In more comprehenſive and

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enlightened underſtandings, their natural effect is caution and diffidence with reſpect to the iſſue of every experiment, of which we do not perceive diſtinctly all the remote conſequences. Nor is this caution at all inconſiſtent with a firm confidence in the certainty of that triumph which truth and liberty muſt infallibly gain in the end over error and injuſtice. On the contrary, it is a natural and obvious conſequence of ſuch a conviction; inaſmuch as the ſame arguments on which this conviction is founded, prove to us, that the progreſs of mankind towards the perfection of the ſocial order, muſt neceſſarily, in every caſe, be gradual; and that it muſt be diverſified in the courſe it takes, according to the ſituations and characters of nations. To direct, and, as far as poſſible, to accelerate, this progreſs, ought to be the great aim of the enlightened ſtateſman, and, indeed, of every man who wiſhes well to his ſpecies; but it is neceſſary for him always to remember, that conſiderable alterations in the eſtabliſhed order, are very ſeldom to be effected immediately and directly by political regulations; and that they are, in all caſes, moſt ſucceſsful and moſt permanent, when they are accompliſhed gradually by natural cauſes, freed from thoſe reſtraints which had formerly checked their operation. In the governments, indeed, of modern Europe, it is much more neceſſary to aboliſh old inſtitutions, than to introduce new ones; and if this reformation be kept ſteadily in view, and not puſhed farther at any time than circumſtances render expedient, or the ideas of the times recommend, the eſſential principles of a more perfect order of things, will gradually eſtabliſh themſelves, without any convulſion.

ACCORDING to this view of the ſubject, the ſpeculation concerning the perfect order of ſociety, is to be regarded merely as a deſcription of the ultimate objects at which the ſtateſman ought to aim. The tranquillity of his adminiſtration, and the immediate ſucceſs of his meaſures, depend on his good ſenſe, and his practical ſkill. And his theoretical principles only enable him to direct his meaſures ſteadily and wiſely, to promote the improvement and happineſs of mankind; and prevent him from being ever led aſtray from theſe important objects, by more limited views of temporary expedience.

BEFORE taking leave of this ſubject, it may be proper for me to attempt obviating, a little more fully than I have done, an objection which has been frequently drawn, from the paſt experience of mankind, againſt that ſuppoſition of their progreſſive improvement, on which all the foregoing reaſonings proceed. How mournful are the viciſſitudes which hiſtory exhibits to us, in the courſe of human affairs; and how little foundation do they afford to our ſanguine proſpects concerning futurity! If, in thoſe parts of the earth which were formerly inhabited by barbarians, we now ſee the moſt ſplendid exertions of genius, and the happieſt forms of civil policy, we behold others which, in antient times, were the ſeats of ſcience, of civiliſation, and of liberty, at preſent immerſed in ſuperſtition, and laid waſte by deſpotiſm. After a ſhort period of civil, of military, and of literary glory, the proſpect has changed at once: the career of degeneracy has begun, and has proceeded till it could advance no farther; or ſome unforeſeen calamity has occurred, which has obliterated, for a time, all memory of former

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former improvements, and has condemned mankind to re-trace, ſtep by ſtep, the ſame path by which their forefathers had riſen to greatneſs. In a word; on ſuch a retroſpective view of human affairs, man appears to be the mere ſport of fortune and of accident; or rather, he appears to be doomed, by the condition of his nature, to run alternately the career of improvement and of degeneracy; and to realiſe the beautiful but melancholy fable of Siſyphus, by an eternal renovation of hope and of diſappointment.

In oppoſition to theſe diſcouraging views of the ſtate and progreſs of man; it may be remarked in general, that in the courſe of theſe latter ages, a variety of events have happened in the hiſtory of the world, which render the condition of the human race eſſentially different from what it ever was among the nations of antiquity; and which, of conſequence, render all our reaſonings concerning their future fortunes, in ſo far as they are founded merely on their paſt experience, unphiloſophical and inconcluſive. The alterations which have taken place in the art of war, in conſequence of the invention of fire-arms, and of the modern ſcience of fortification, have given to civiliſed nations a ſecurity againſt the irruptions of barbarians, which they never before poſſeſſed. The more extended, and the more conſtant intercourſe, which the improvements in commerce and in the art of navigation have opened, among the diſtant quarters of the globe, cannot fail to operate in undermining local and national prejudices, and in imparting to the whole ſpecies the intellectual acquiſitions of each particular community. The accumulated experience of ages has already taught

taught the rulers of mankind, that the moſt fruitful and the moſt permanent ſources of revenue, are to be derived, not from conquered and tributary provinces, but from the internal proſperity and wealth of their own ſubjects:—and the ſame experience now begins to teach nations, that the increaſe of their own wealth, ſo far from depending on the poverty and depreſſion of their neighbours, is intimately connected with their induſtry and opulence; and, conſequently, that thoſe commercial jealouſies, which have hitherto been ſo fertile a ſource of animoſity among different ſtates, are founded entirely on ignorance and prejudice. Among all the circumſtances, however, which diſtinguiſh the preſent ſtate of mankind from that of antient nations, the invention of printing is by far the moſt important; and, indeed, this ſingle event, independently of every other, is ſufficient to change the whole courſe of human affairs.

THE influence which printing is likely to have on the future hiſtory of the world, has not, I think, been hitherto examined, by philoſophers, with the attention which the importance of the ſubject deſerves. One reaſon for this may, probably, have been, that, as the invention has never been made but once, it has been conſidered rather as the effect of a fortunate accident, than as the reſult of thoſe general cauſes on which the progreſs of ſociety ſeems to depend. But it may be reaſonably queſtioned, how far this idea be juſt. For, although it ſhould be allowed, that the invention of printing was accidental, with reſpect to the individual who made it, it may, with truth, be conſidered as the natural reſult of a ſtate of the world, when a number of great and contiguous nations are all engaged in the ſtudy

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ſtudy of literature, in the purſuit of ſcience, and in the practice of the arts: inſomuch, that I do not think it extravagant to affirm, that, if this invention had not been made by the particular perſon to whom it is aſcribed, the ſame art, or ſome analogous art, anſwering a ſimilar purpoſe, would have infallibly been invented by ſome other perſon, and at no very diſtant period. The art of printing, therefore, is entitled to be conſidered as a ſtep in the natural hiſtory of man, no leſs than the art of writing; and they who are ſceptical about the future progreſs of the race, merely in conſequence of its paſt hiſtory, reaſon as unphiloſophically, as the member of a ſavage tribe, who, deriving his own acquaintance with former times from oral tradition only, ſhould affect to call in queſtion the efficacy of written records, in accelerating the progreſs of knowledge and of civiliſation.

WHAT will be the particular effects of this invention, (which has been, hitherto, much checked in its operation, by the reſtraints on the liberty of the preſs in the greater part of Europe,) it is beyond the reach of human ſagacity to conjecture; but, in general, we may venture to predict with confidence, that, in every country, it will gradually operate to widen the circle of ſcience and civiliſation; to diſtribute more equally, among all the members of the community, the advantages of the political union; and to enlarge the baſis of equitable governments, by increaſing the number of thoſe who underſtand their value, and are intereſted to defend them. The ſcience of legiſlation, too, with all the other branches of knowledge which are connected with human improvement, may be expected to

advance with rapidity; and, in proportion as the opinions and institutions of men approach to truth and to juſtice, they will be ſecured againſt thoſe revolutions to which human affairs have always been hitherto ſubject. *Opinionum enim commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.* CHAP. IV.

THE revolutions incident to the democratical ſtates of antiquity furniſh no ſolid objection to the foregoing obſervations: for none of theſe ſtates enjoyed the advantages which modern times derive from the diffuſion, and from the rapid circulation of knowledge. In theſe ſtates, moſt of the revolutions which happened, aroſe from the ſtruggles of demagogues, who employed the paſſions of the multitude, in ſubſerviency to their own intereſt and ambition; and to all of them, the ingenious and ſtriking remark of Hobbes will be found applicable; that "Democracy is nothing but an ariſtocracy of orators, inter-"rupted ſometimes by the temporary monarchy of a ſingle "orator." While this continued to be the caſe, democratical conſtitutions were, undoubtedly, the moſt unfavourable of any to the tranquillity of mankind; and the only way to preſerve the order of ſociety was, by ſkilfully balancing againſt each other, the prejudices, and the ſeparate intereſts of different orders of citizens. That ſuch balances, however, will every day become leſs neceſſary for checking the turbulence of the democratical ſpirit in free governments, appears probable from this; that among the various advantages to be expected from the liberty of the preſs, one of the greateſt is, the effect which it muſt neceſſarily have in diminiſhing the influence of popular eloquence; both by curing men of thoſe prejudices upon which

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it operates, and by ſubjecting it to the irreſiſtible control of enlightened opinions. In the republican ſtates of antiquity, the eloquence of demagogues was indeed a dangerous engine of faction, while it aſpired to govern nations by its unlimited ſway in directing popular councils. But, now, when the effuſions of the orator are, by means of the preſs, ſubjected to the immediate tribunal of an inquiſitive age, the eloquence of legiſlative aſſemblies is forced to borrow its tone from the ſpirit of the times; and if it retains its aſcendant in human affairs, it can only be, by lending its aid to the prevailing cauſe, and to the permanent intereſts of truth and of freedom.

Of the progreſs which may yet be made in the different branches of moral and political philoſophy, we may form ſome idea, from what has already happened in phyſics, ſince the time that Lord Bacon united, in one uſeful direction, the labours of thoſe who cultivate that ſcience. At the period when he wrote, phyſics was certainly in a more hopeleſs ſtate, than that of moral and political philoſophy in the preſent age. A perpetual ſucceſſion of chimerical theories had, till then, amuſed the world; and the prevailing opinion was, that the caſe would continue to be the ſame for ever. Why then ſhould we deſpair of the competency of the human faculties to eſtabliſh ſolid and permanent ſyſtems, upon other ſubjects, which are of ſtill more ſerious importance? Phyſics, it is true, is free from many difficulties which obſtruct our progreſs in moral and political inquiries; but, perhaps, this advantage may be more than counterbalanced by the tendency they have to engage a more univerſal, and a more earneſt attention, in conſequence of their coming home

home more immediately to our "buſineſs and our boſoms." When theſe ſciences too begin to be proſecuted on a regular and ſyſtematical plan, their improvement will go on with an accelerated velocity; not only as the number of ſpeculative minds will be every day increaſed by the diffuſion of knowledge, but as an acquaintance with the juſt rules of inquiry, will more and more place important diſcoveries within the reach of ordinary underſtandings. "Such rules" (ſays Lord Bacon) "do, in ſome ſort, equal men's wits, and leave no great advantage or pre-eminence to the perfect and excellent motions of "the ſpirit. To draw a ſtraight line, or to deſcribe a circle, "by aim of hand only, there muſt be a great difference between an unſteady and unpractiſed hand, and a ſteady and "practiſed; but, to do it by rule or compaſs, it is much "alike."

NOR muſt we omit to mention the value which the art of printing communicates to the moſt limited exertions of literary induſtry, by treaſuring them up as materials for the future examination of more enlightened inquirers. In this reſpect the preſs beſtows upon the ſciences, an advantage ſomewhat analogous to that which the mechanical arts derive from the diviſion of labour. As in theſe arts, the exertions of an uninformed multitude, are united by the comprehenſive ſkill of the artiſt, in the accompliſhment of effects aſtoniſhing by their magnitude, and by the complicated ingenuity they diſplay; ſo, in the ſciences, the obſervations and conjectures of obſcure individuals on thoſe ſubjects which are level to their capacities, and which fall under their own immediate notice, accumulate for a courſe

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of years; till at laſt, ſome philoſopher ariſes, who combines theſe ſcattered materials, and exhibits, in his ſyſtem, not merely the force of a ſingle mind, but the intellectual power of the age in which he lives.

IT is upon theſe laſt conſiderations, much more than on the efforts of original genius, that I would reſt my hopes of the progreſs of the race. What genius alone could accompliſh in ſcience, the world has already ſeen: and I am ready to ſubſcribe to the opinion of thoſe who think, that the ſplendor of its paſt exertions is not likely to be obſcured by the fame of future philoſophers. But the experiment yet remains to be tried, what lights may be thrown on the moſt important of all ſubjects, by the free diſcuſſions of inquiſitive nations, unfettered by prejudice, and ſtimulated in their inquiries by every motive that can awaken whatever is either generous or ſelfiſh in human nature. How trifling are the effects which the bodily ſtrength of an individual is able to produce, (however great may be his natural endowments,) when compared with thoſe which have been accompliſhed by the conſpiring force of an ordinary multitude? It was not the ſingle arm of a Theſeus, or a Hercules, but the hands of ſuch men as ourſelves, that, in antient Egypt, raiſed thoſe monuments of architecture, which remain from age to age, to atteſt the wonders of combined and of perſevering induſtry; and, while they humble the importance of the individual, to exalt the dignity, and to animate the labours, of the ſpecies.

THESE views with reſpect to the probable improvement of the world, are ſo conducive to the comfort of thoſe who entertain

entertain them, that even, although they were founded in deluſion, a wiſe man would be diſpoſed to cheriſh them. What ſhould have induced ſome reſpectable writers to controvert them, with ſo great an aſperity of expreſſion, it is not eaſy to conjecture; for whatever may be thought of their truth, their practical tendency is ſurely favourable to human happineſs; nor can that temper of mind, which diſpoſes a man to give them a welcome reception, be candidly ſuſpected of deſigns hoſtile to the intereſts of humanity. One thing is certain, that the greateſt of all obſtacles to the improvement of the world, is that prevailing belief of its improbability, which damps the exertions of ſo many individuals; and that, in proportion as the contrary opinion becomes general, it realiſes the event which it leads us to anticipate. Surely, if any thing can have a tendency to call forth in the public ſervice the exertions of individuals, it muſt be an idea of the magnitude of that work in which they are conſpiring, and a belief of the permanence of thoſe benefits, which they confer on mankind by every attempt to inform and to enlighten them. As in antient Rome, therefore, it was regarded as the mark of a good citizen, never to deſpair of the fortunes of the republic;—ſo the good citizen of the world, whatever may be the political aſpect of his own times, will never deſpair of the fortunes of the human race; but will act upon the conviction, that prejudice, ſlavery, and corruption, muſt gradually give way to truth, liberty, and virtue; and that, in the moral world, as well as in the material, the farther our obſervations extend, and the longer they are continued, the more we ſhall perceive of order and of benevolent deſign in the univerſe.

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Nor is this change in the condition of man, in conſequence of the progreſs of reaſon, by any means contrary to the general analogy of his natural hiſtory. In the infancy of the individual, his exiſtence is preſerved by inſtincts, which diſappear afterwards, when they are no longer neceſſary. In the ſavage ſtate of our ſpecies, there are inſtincts which ſeem to form a part of the human conſtitution; and of which no traces remain in thoſe periods of ſociety in which their uſe is ſuperſeded by a more enlarged experience. Why then ſhould we deny the probability of ſomething ſimilar to this, in the hiſtory of man conſidered in his political capacity? I have already had occaſion to obſerve, that the governments which the world has hitherto ſeen, have ſeldom or never taken their riſe from deep-laid ſchemes of human policy. In every ſtate of ſociety which has yet exiſted, the multitude has, in general, acted from the immediate impulſe of paſſion, or from the preſſure of their wants and neceſſities; and, therefore, what we commonly call the political order, is, at leaſt, in a great meaſure, the reſult of the paſſions and wants of man, combined with the circumſtances of his ſituation; or, in other words, it is chiefly the reſult of the wiſdom of nature. So beautifully, indeed, do theſe paſſions and circumſtances act in ſubſerviency to her deſigns, and ſo invariably have they been found, in the hiſtory of paſt ages, to conduct men in time to certain beneficial arrangements, that we can hardly bring ourſelves to believe, that the end was not foreſeen by thoſe who were engaged in the purſuit. Even in thoſe rude periods of ſociety, when, like the lower animals, he follows blindly his inſtinctive principles of action, he is led by an inviſible hand, and contributes his ſhare to the execution of a plan, of the nature

and advantages of which he has no conception. The operations of the bee, when it begins, for the firſt time, to form its cell, conveys to us a ſtriking image of the efforts of unenlightened man, in conducting the operations of an infant government.

A GREAT variety of prejudices might be mentioned, which are found to prevail univerſally among our ſpecies in certain periods of ſociety, and which ſeem to be eſſentially neceſſary for maintaining its order, in ages when men are unable to comprehend the purpoſes for which governments are inſtituted. As ſociety advances, theſe prejudices gradually loſe their influence on the higher claſſes, and would probably ſoon diſappear altogether, if it were not found expedient to prolong their exiſtence, as a ſource of authority over the multitude. In an age, however, of univerſal and of unreſtrained diſcuſſion, it is impoſſible that they can long maintain their empire; nor ought we to regret their decline, if the important ends to which they have been ſubſervient in the paſt experience of mankind, are found to be accompliſhed by the growing light of philoſophy. On this ſuppoſition, a hiſtory of human prejudices, in ſo far as they have ſupplied the place of more enlarged political views, may, at ſome future period, furniſh to the philoſopher a ſubject of ſpeculation, no leſs pleaſing and inſtructive, than that beneficent wiſdom of nature, which guides the operations of the lower animals; and which, even in our own ſpecies, takes upon itſelf the care of the individual in the infancy of human reaſon.

I HAVE only to obſerve farther, that, in proportion as theſe proſpects, with reſpect to the progreſs of reaſon, the diffuſion of

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of knowledge, and the conſequent improvement of mankind, ſhall be realiſed; the political hiſtory of the world will be regulated by ſteady and uniform cauſes, and the philoſopher will be enabled to form probable conjectures with reſpect to the future courſe of human affairs.

IT is juſtly remarked by Mr. Hume, that "what depends "on a few perſons is, in a great meaſure, to be aſcribed to "chance, or ſecret and unknown cauſes: what ariſes from a "great number, may often be accounted for by determinate "and known cauſes." "To judge by this rule," (he continues,) "the domeſtic and the gradual revolutions of a ſtate "muſt be a more proper object of reaſoning and obſervation, "than the foreign and the violent, which are commonly pro- "duced by ſingle perſons, and are more influenced by whim, "folly, or caprice, than by general paſſions and intereſts. The "depreſſion of the Lords, and riſe of the Commons, in Eng- "land, after the ſtatutes of alienation and the increaſe of trade "and induſtry, are more eaſily accounted for by general prin- "ciples, than the depreſſion of the Spaniſh, and riſe of the "French monarchy, after the death of Charles the Fifth. Had "Harry the Fourth, Cardinal Richlieu, and Louis the Four- "teenth, been Spaniards; and Philip the Second, Third, and "Fourth, and Charles the Second, been Frenchmen; the hiſtory "of theſe nations had been entirely reverſed."

FROM theſe principles, it would ſeem to be a neceſſary conſequence, that, in proportion as the circumſtances ſhall operate which I have been endeavouring to illuſtrate, the whole ſyſtem of

of human affairs, including both the domeſtic order of ſociety in particular ſtates, and the relations which exiſt among different communities, in conſequence of war and negotiation, will be ſubjected to the influence of cauſes which are "known and "determinate." Thoſe domeſtic affairs, which, according to Mr. Hume, are already proper ſubjects of reaſoning and obſervation, in conſequence of their dependence on general intereſts and paſſions, will become ſo, more and more, daily, as prejudices ſhall decline, and knowledge ſhall be diffuſed among the lower orders: while the relations among different ſtates, which have depended hitherto, in a great meaſure, on the "whim, folly, and caprice," of ſingle perſons, will be gradually more and more regulated by the general intereſts of the individuals who compoſe them, and by the popular opinions of more enlightened times. Already, during the very ſhort interval which has elapſed ſince the publication of Mr. Hume's writings, an aſtoniſhing change has taken place in Europe. The myſteries of courts have been laid open; the influence of ſecret negotiation on the relative ſituation of ſtates has declined; and the ſtudies of thoſe men whoſe public ſpirit or ambition devotes them to the ſervice of their country, have been diverted from the intrigues of cabinets, and the details of the diplomatic code, to the liberal and manly purſuits of political philoſophy.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Of the Aſſociation of Ideas.

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THE ſubject on which I am now to enter, naturally divides itſelf into two Parts. The Firſt, relates to the influence of Aſſociation, in regulating the ſucceſſion of our thoughts; the Second, to its influence on the intellectual powers, and on the moral character, by the more intimate and indiſſoluble combinations which it leads us to form in infancy and in early youth. The two inquiries, indeed, run into each other; but it will contribute much to the order of our ſpeculations, to keep the foregoing arrangement in view.

PART FIRST.

Of the Influence of Aſſociation in regulating the Succeſſion of our Thoughts.

SECTION I.

General Obſervations on this Part of our Conſtitution, and on the Language of Philoſophers with reſpect to it.

THAT one thought is often ſuggeſted to the mind by another; and that the ſight of an external object often recalls former occurrences, and revives former feelings, are facts

facts which are perfectly familiar, even to thoſe who are the leaſt diſpoſed to ſpeculate concerning the principles of their nature. In paſſing along a road which we have formerly travelled in the company of a friend, the particulars of the converſation in which we were then engaged, are frequently ſuggeſted to us by the objects we meet with. In ſuch a ſcene, we recollect that a particular ſubject was ſtarted; and, in paſſing the different houſes, and plantations, and rivers, the arguments we were diſcuſſing when we laſt ſaw them, recur ſpontaneouſly to the memory. The connexion which is formed in the mind between the words of a language and the ideas they denote; the connexion which is formed between the different words of a diſcourſe we have committed to memory; the connexion between the different notes of a piece of muſic in the mind of the muſician, are all obvious inſtances of the ſame general law of our nature.

THE influence of perceptible objects in reviving former thoughts and former feelings, is more particularly remarkable. After time has, in ſome degree, reconciled us to the death of a friend, how wonderfully are we affected the firſt time we enter the houſe where he lived! Every thing we ſee; the apartment where he ſtudied; the chair upon which he ſat, recal to us the happineſs we have enjoyed together; and we ſhould feel it a ſort of violation of that reſpect we owe to his memory, to engage in any light or indifferent diſcourſe when ſuch objects are before us. In the caſe, too, of thoſe remarkable ſcenes which intereſt the curioſity, from the memorable perſons or tranſactions which we have been accuſtomed to connect with them in the courſe of our ſtudies, the fancy is more awakened

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by the actual perception of the ſcene itſelf, than by the mere conception or imagination of it. Hence the pleaſure we enjoy in viſiting claſſical ground; in beholding the retreats which inſpired the genius of our favourite authors, or the fields which have been dignified by exertions of heroic virtue. How feeble are the emotions produced by the livelieſt conception of modern Italy, to what the poet felt, when, amidſt the ruins of Rome,

> " He drew th' inſpiring breath of antient arts,
> " ——And trod the ſacred walks
> " Where, at each ſtep, imagination burns * !"

THE well-known effect of a particular tune on Swiſs regiments when at a diſtance from home, furniſhes a very ſtriking illuſtration of the peculiar power of a perception, or of an impreſſion on the ſenſes, to awaken aſſociated thoughts and feelings: and numberleſs facts of a ſimilar nature muſt have occurred to every perſon of moderate ſenſibility, in the courſe of his own experience.

" WHILST we were at dinner," (ſays Captain King,) " in " this miſerable hut, on the banks of the river Awatſka; the " gueſts of a people with whoſe exiſtence we had before been " ſcarce acquainted, and at the extremity of the habitable " globe; a ſolitary, half-worn pewter ſpoon, whoſe ſhape was " familiar to us, attracted our attention; and, on examination, " we found it ſtamped on the back with the word *London*.

* " Quacunque ingredimur," (ſays Cicero, ſpeaking of Athens,) " in ali- " quam hiſtoriam veſtigium ponimus."

" I cannot

" I cannot paſs over this circumſtance in ſilence, out of grati-
" tude for the many pleaſant thoughts, the anxious hopes, and
" tender remembrances, it excited in us. Thoſe who have ex-
" perienced the effects that long abſence, and extreme diſtance
" from their native country, produce on the mind, will readily
" conceive the pleaſure ſuch a trifling incident can give."

THE difference between the effect of a perception and an idea, in awakening aſſociated thoughts and feelings, is finely deſcribed in the introduction to the fifth book *De finibus*.

" WE agreed," (ſays Cicero,) " that we ſhould take our
" afternoon's walk in the academy, as at that time of the day
" it was a place where there was no reſort of company. Ac-
" cordingly, at the hour appointed, we went to Piſo's. We
" paſſed the time in converſing on different matters during our
" ſhort walk from the double gate, till we came to the aca-
" demy, that juſtly celebrated ſpot; which, as we wiſhed, we
" found a perfect ſolitude." " I know not," (ſaid Piſo,)
" whether it be a natural feeling, or an illuſion of the imagina-
" tion founded on habit, that we are more powerfully affected
" by the ſight of thoſe places which have been much fre-
" quented by illuſtrious men, than when we either liſten to the
" recital, or read the detail, of their great actions. At this
" moment, I feel ſtrongly that emotion which I ſpeak of. I
" ſee before me, the perfect form of Plato, who was wont to
" diſpute in this very place: theſe gardens not only recal him
" to my memory, but preſent his very perſon to my ſenſes. I
" fancy to myſelf, that here ſtood Speuſippus; there Xenocrates,

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" and here, on this bench, ſat his diſciple Polemo. To me, " our antient ſenate-houſe ſeems peopled with the like viſionary " forms; for, often, when I enter it, the ſhades of Scipio, of " Cato, and of Lælius, and, in particular, of my vene- " rable grandfather, riſe to my imagination. In ſhort, ſuch " is the effect of local ſituation in recalling aſſociated ideas " to the mind, that it is not without reaſon, ſome philoſo- " phers have founded on this principle a ſpecies of artificial " memory."

THIS effect of perceptible objects, in awakening aſſociated thoughts and aſſociated feelings, ſeems to ariſe, in a great meaſure, from the permanence of the impreſſions which ſuch objects produce. Before one idea can ſuggeſt another idea, it muſt itſelf diſappear; and a train, perhaps, ſucceeds, to which the firſt bears a very ſlight relation. But, in the caſe of perception, the object remains before us; and introduces to the mind, one after another, all the various ideas and emotions with which it has any connexion.

I ALREADY obſerved, that the connexions which exiſt among our thoughts, have been long familiarly known to the vulgar, as well as to philoſophers. It is, indeed, only of late, that we have been poſſeſſed of an appropriated phraſe to expreſs them; but that the general fact is not a recent diſcovery, may be inferred from many of the common maxims of prudence and of propriety, which have plainly been ſuggeſted by an attention to this part of our conſtitution. When we lay it down, for example, as a general rule, to avoid in converſation

all expreſſions, and all topics of diſcourſe, which have any relation, however remote, to ideas of an unpleaſant nature, we plainly proceed on the ſuppoſition that there are certain connexions among our thoughts, which have an influence over the order of their ſucceſſion. It is unneceſſary to remark, how much of the comfort and good-humour of ſocial life depends on an attention to this conſideration. Such attentions are more particularly eſſential in our intercourſe with men of the world; for the commerce of ſociety has a wonderful effect in increaſing the quickneſs and the facility with which we aſſociate all ideas which have any reference to life and manners*; and, of conſequence, it muſt render the ſenſibility alive to many circumſtances which, from the remoteneſs of their relation to the ſituation and hiſtory of the parties, would otherwiſe have produced no impreſſion.

WHEN an idea, however, is thus ſuggeſted by aſſociation, it produces a ſlighter impreſſion, or, at leaſt, it produces its impreſſion more gradually, than if it were preſented more directly and immediately to the mind. And hence, when we are under a neceſſity of communicating any diſagreeable information to another, delicacy leads us, inſtead of mentioning the thing

* The ſuperiority which the man of the world poſſeſſes over the recluſe ſtudent, in his knowledge of mankind, is partly the reſult of this quickneſs and facility of aſſociation. Thoſe trifling circumſtances in converſation and behaviour, which, to the latter, convey only their moſt obvious and avowed meaning, lay open to the former, many of the trains of thought which are connected with them, and frequently give him a diſtinct view of a character, on that very ſide where it is ſuppoſed to be moſt concealed from his obſervation.

itſelf,

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itſelf, to mention ſomething elſe from which our meaning may be underſtood. In this manner, we prepare our hearers for the unwelcome intelligence.

THE diſtinction between groſs and delicate flattery, is founded upon the ſame principle. As nothing is more offenſive than flattery which is direct and pointed, praiſe is conſidered as happy and elegant, in proportion to the ſlightneſs of the aſſociations by which it is conveyed.

To this tendency which one thought has to introduce another, philoſophers have given the name of the *Aſſociation of ideas;* and, as I would not wiſh, excepting in a caſe of neceſſity, to depart from common language, or to expoſe myſelf to the charge of delivering old doctrines in a new form, I ſhall continue to make uſe of the ſame expreſſion. I am ſenſible, indeed, that the expreſſion is by no means unexceptionable; and that, if it be uſed (as it frequently has been) to comprehend thoſe laws by which the ſucceſſion of all our thoughts and of all our mental operations is regulated, the word *idea* muſt be underſtood in a ſenſe much more extenſive than it is commonly employed in. It is very juſtly remarked by Dr. Reid, that "memory, judgment, reaſoning, paſſions, affections, and "purpoſes; in a word, every operation of the mind, except-"ing thoſe of ſenſe, is excited occaſionally in the train of our "thoughts: ſo that, if we make the train of our thoughts to "be only a train of ideas, the word *idea* muſt be underſtood "to denote all theſe operations." In continuing, therefore, to employ

employ, upon this ſubject, that language, which has been conſecrated by the practice of our beſt philoſophical writers in England, I would not be underſtood to diſpute the advantages which might be derived from the introduction of a new phraſe, more preciſe and more applicable to the fact. CHAP. V.

THE ingenious author whom I laſt quoted, ſeems to think that the *aſſociation of ideas* has no claim to be conſidered as an original principle, or as an ultimate fact in our nature. "I believe," (ſays he,) "that the original principles of the "mind, of which we can give no account, but that ſuch is "our conſtitution, are more in number than is commonly "thought. But we ought not to multiply them without "neceſſity. That trains of thinking, which, by frequent repe-"tition have become familiar, ſhould ſpontaneouſly offer them-"ſelves to our fancy, ſeems to require no other original qua-"lity but the power of habit."

WITH this obſervation I cannot agree; becauſe I think it more philoſophical to reſolve the power of habit into the aſſociation of ideas, than to reſolve the aſſociation of ideas into habit.

THE word *habit*, in the ſenſe in which it is commonly employed, expreſſes that facility which the mind acquires, in all its exertions, both animal and intellectual, in conſequence of practice. We apply it to the dexterity of the workman; to the extemporary fluency of the orator; to the rapidity of the arithmetical accountant. That this facility is the effect of practice,

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practice, we know from experience to be a fact: but it does not ſeem to be an ultimate fact, nor incapable of analyſis.

In the Eſſay on Attention, I ſhewed that the effects of practice are produced partly on the body, and partly on the mind. The muſcles which we employ in mechanical operations, become ſtronger, and become more obedient to the will. This is a fact, of which it is probable that philoſophy will never be able to give any explanation.

But even in mechanical operations, the effects of practice are produced partly on the mind; and, in ſo far as this is the caſe, they are reſolvable into what philoſophers call, the *aſſociation of ideas;* or into that general fact, which Dr. Reid himſelf has ſtated, "that trains of thinking, which, by frequent repe-" tition, have become familiar, ſpontaneouſly offer themſelves " to the mind." In the caſe of habits which are purely intellectual, the effects of practice reſolve themſelves completely into this principle: and it appears to me more preciſe and more ſatisfactory, to ſtate the principle itſelf as a law of our conſtitution, than to ſlur it over under the conciſe appellation of *habit*, which we apply in common to mind and to body.

The tendency in the human mind to aſſociate or connect its thoughts together, is ſometimes called (but very improperly) the *imagination*. Between theſe two parts of our conſtitution, there is indeed a very intimate relation; and it is probably owing to this relation, that they have been ſo generally confounded under the ſame name. When the mind is occupied about

about abſent objects of ſenſe, (which, I believe, it is habitually in the great majority of mankind,) its train of thought is merely a ſeries of conceptions; or, in common language, of imaginations *. In the caſe, too, of poetical imagination, it is the aſſociation of ideas that ſupplies the materials out of which its combinations are formed; and when ſuch an imaginary combination is become familiar to the mind, it is the aſſociation of ideas that connects its different parts together, and unites them into one whole. The aſſociation of ideas, therefore, although perfectly diſtinct from the power of imagination, is immediately and eſſentially ſubſervient to all its exertions.

THE laſt obſervation ſeems to me to point out, alſo, the circumſtance which has led the greater part of Engliſh writers, to uſe the words Imagination and Fancy as ſynonymous. It is obvious that a creative imagination, when a perſon poſſeſſes it ſo habitually that it may be regarded as forming one of the characteriſtics of his genius, implies a power of ſummoning up, at pleaſure, a particular claſs of ideas; and of ideas related to each other in a particular manner; which power can be the reſult only, of certain habits of aſſociation, which the individual has acquired. It is to this power of the mind, which is evidently a particular turn of thought, and not one of the common principles of our nature, that our beſt writers (ſo far as I am able to judge) refer, in general, when they make uſe of the word *fancy*: I ſay, in general; for in diſquiſitions of this

* Accordingly, Hobbes calls the train of thought in the mind, "Conſequentia ſive ſeries imaginationum." "Per ſeriem imaginationum intelligo "ſucceſſionem unius cogitationis ad aliam."——LEVIATHAN, cap. iii.

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ſort, in which the beſt writers are ſeldom preciſe and ſteady in the employment of words, it is only to their prevailing practice that we can appeal as an authority. What the particular relations are, by which thoſe ideas are connected that are ſubſervient to poetical imagination, I ſhall not inquire at preſent. I think they are chiefly thoſe of reſemblance and analogy. But whatever they may be, the power of ſummoning them up at pleaſure, as it is the ground-work of poetical genius, is of ſufficient importance in the human conſtitution to deſerve an appropriated name; and, for this purpoſe, the word *fancy* would appear to be the moſt convenient that our language affords.

DR. REID has ſomewhere obſerved, that "the part of our "conſtitution on which the aſſociation of ideas depends, was "called, by the older Engliſh writers, *the fantaſy or fancy*;" an uſe of the word, we may remark, which coincides, in many inſtances, with that which I propoſe to make of it. It differs from it only in this, that theſe writers applied it to the aſſociation of ideas in general, whereas I reſtrict its application to that habit of aſſociation, which is ſubſervient to poetical imagination.

ACCORDING to the explanation which has now been given of the word Fancy, the office of this power is to collect materials for the Imagination; and therefore the latter power preſuppoſes the former, while the former does not neceſſarily ſuppoſe the latter. A man whoſe habits of aſſociation preſent to him, for illuſtrating or embelliſhing a ſubject,

ſubject, a number of reſembling or of analogous ideas, we call a man of fancy; but for an effort of imagination, various other powers are neceſſary, particularly the powers of taſte and of judgment; without which, we can hope to produce nothing that will be a ſource of pleaſure to others. It is the power of fancy which ſupplies the poet with metaphorical language, and with all the analogies which are the foundation of his alluſions; but it is the power of imagination that creates the complex ſcenes he deſcribes, and the fictitious characters he delineates. To fancy, we apply the epithets of rich or luxuriant; to imagination, thoſe of beautiful or ſublime.

SECTION II.

Of the Principles of Aſſociation among our Ideas.

THE facts which I ſtated in the former Section, to illuſtrate the tendency of a perception, or of an idea, to ſuggeſt ideas related to it, are ſo obvious as to be matter of common remark. But the relations which connect all our thoughts together, and the laws which regulate their ſucceſſion, were but little attended to before the publication of Mr. Hume's writings.

IT is well known to thoſe who are in the leaſt converſant with the preſent ſtate of metaphyſical ſcience, that this eminent writer has attempted to reduce all the principles of aſſociation among

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among our ideas to three: Reſemblance, Contiguity in time and place, and Cauſe and Effect. The attempt was great, and worthy of his genius; but it has been ſhewn by ſeveral writers ſince his time *, that his enumeration is not only incomplete, but that it is even indiſtinct, ſo far as it goes.

IT is not neceſſary for my preſent purpoſe, that I ſhould enter into a critical examination of this part of Mr. Hume's ſyſtem; or that I ſhould attempt to ſpecify thoſe principles of aſſociation which he has omitted. Indeed, it does not ſeem to me, that the problem admits of a ſatisfactory ſolution; for there is no poſſible relation among the objects of our knowledge, which may not ſerve to connect them together in the mind; and, therefore, although one enumeration may be more comprehenſive than another, a perfectly complete enumeration is ſcarcely to be expected.

* See, in particular, Lord Kaimes's Elements of Criticiſm, and Dr. Gerard's Eſſay on Genius. See alſo Dr. Campbell's Philoſophy of Rhetoric, vol. i. p. 197.

It is obſerved by Dr. Beattie, that ſomething like an attempt to enumerate the laws of aſſociation is to be found in Ariſtotle; who, in ſpeaking of Recollection, inſinuates, with his uſual brevity, that "the relations, by which we "are led from one thought to another, in tracing out, or *hunting after*," (as he calls it,) "any particular thought which does not immediately occur, are chiefly "three; Reſemblance, Contrariety, and Contiguity."

See *Diſſertations, Moral and Critical*, p. 9. Alſo p. 145.

The paſſage to which Dr. Beattie refers, is as follows:

Ὅταν ὖν ἀναμιμνησκώμεθα, κινούμεθα τῶν πρότερων τινα κινήσεων, ἕως ἂν κινηθῶμεν, μεθ' ἣν εἰωθε γίνεσθαι. Διὸ καὶ τὸ ἐφεξῆς ζητοῦμεν νοήσαντες ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, ἢ ἄλλου τινός, καὶ ἀφ' ὁμοίου, ἢ ἐναντίου, ἢ τοῦ συνεγγυς. Διὰ τοῦτο γίνεται ἡ ἀνάμνησις

ARISTOT. *de Memor. et Reminiſc.* vol. i. p. 681. Edit. DU VAL.

NOR

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NOR is it merely in conſequence of the relations among things, that our notions of them are aſſociated: they are frequently coupled together by means of relations among the words which denote them; ſuch as a ſimilarity of ſound, or other circumſtances ſtill more trifling. The alliteration which is ſo common in poetry, and in proverbial ſayings, ſeems to ariſe, partly at leaſt, from aſſociations of ideas founded on the accidental circumſtance, of the two words which expreſs them beginning with the ſame letter.

> "But thouſands die, without or this or that,
> "Die; and endow a College, or a Cat."
>
> POPE'S Ep. to Lord BATHURST.
>
> "Ward tried, on Puppies, and the Poor, his drop."
>
> Id. Imitat. of HORACE.

This indeed pleaſes only on ſlight occaſions, when it may be ſuppoſed that the mind is in ſome degree playful, and under the influence of thoſe principles of aſſociation which commonly take place when we are careleſs and diſengaged. Every perſon muſt be offended with the ſecond line of the following couplet, which forms part of a very ſublime deſcription of the Divine power:

> "Breathes in our ſoul, informs our mortal part,
> "As full, as perfect, in a Hair as Heart."
>
> ESSAY on MAN, Ep. i.

I HAVE already ſaid, that the view of the ſubject which I propoſe to take, does not require a complete enumeration of our principles of aſſociation. There is, however, an important diſtinction among them, to which I ſhall have occaſion frequently to refer; and which, ſo far as I know, has not hitherto attracted the notice

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notice of philoſophers. The relations upon which ſome of them are founded, are perfectly obvious to the mind; thoſe which are the foundation of others, are diſcovered only in conſequence of particular efforts of attention. Of the former kind, are the relations of Reſemblance and Analogy, of Vicinity in time and place, and thoſe which ariſe from accidental coincidences in the ſound of different words. Theſe, in general, connect our thoughts together, when they are ſuffered to take their natural courſe, and when we are conſcious of little or no active exertion. Of the latter kind, is the relation of premiſes and conſequences, and thoſe others, which regulate the train of thought in the mind of the philoſopher, when he is engaged in a particular inveſtigation.

THE facility with which ideas are aſſociated in the mind, is very different in different individuals: a circumſtance which, as I ſhall afterwards ſhew, lays the foundation of remarkable varieties among men, both in reſpect of genius and of character. I am inclined, too, to think that, in the other ſex (probably in conſequence of early education) ideas are more eaſily aſſociated together, than in the minds of men. Hence the livelineſs of their fancy, and the ſuperiority they poſſeſs in epiſtolary writing, and in thoſe kinds of poetry, in which the principal recommendations are, eaſe of thought and expreſſion. Hence, too, the facility with which they contract or loſe habits, and accommodate their minds to new ſituations; and, I may add, the diſpoſition they have to that ſpecies of ſuperſtition which is founded on accidental combinations of circumſtances. The influence which this facility of aſſociation has on the power of taſte, ſhall be afterwards conſidered.

SECTION III.

Of the Power which the Mind has over the Train of its Thoughts.

BY means of the Aſſociation of Ideas, a conſtant current of thoughts, if I may uſe the expreſſion, is made to paſs through the mind while we are awake. Sometimes the current is interrupted, and the thoughts diverted into a new channel, in conſequence of the ideas ſuggeſted by other men, or of the objects of perception with which we are ſurrounded. So completely, however, is the mind in this particular ſubjected to phyſical laws, that it has been juſtly obſerved *, we cannot, by an effort of our will, call up any one thought; and that the train of our ideas depends on cauſes which operate in a manner inexplicable by us.

THIS obſervation, although it has been cenſured as paradoxical, is almoſt ſelf-evident; for to call up a particular thought, ſuppoſes it to be already in the mind. As I ſhall have frequent occaſion, however, to refer to the obſervation afterwards, I ſhall endeavour to obviate the only objection

* By Lord KAIMS, and others.

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which, I think, can reaſonably be urged againſt it; and which is founded on that operation of the mind which is commonly called recollection or intentional memory.

It is evident, that before we attempt to recollect the particular circumſtances of any event, that event in general muſt have been an object of our attention. We remember the outlines of the ſtory, but cannot at firſt give a complete account of it. If we wiſh to recal theſe circumſtances, there are only two ways in which we can proceed. We muſt either form different ſuppoſitions, and then conſider which of theſe tallies beſt with the other circumſtances of the event; or, by revolving in our mind the circumſtances we remember, we muſt endeavour to excite the recollection of the other circumſtances aſſociated with them. The firſt of theſe proceſſes is, properly ſpeaking, an inference of reaſon, and plainly furniſhes no exception to the doctrine already delivered. We have an inſtance of the other mode of recollection, when we are at a loſs for the beginning of a ſentence in reciting a compoſition that we do not perfectly remember; in which caſe we naturally repeat over, two or three times, the concluding words of the preceding ſentence, in order to call up the other words which uſed to be connected with them in the memory. In this inſtance, it is evident, that the circumſtances we deſire to remember, are not recalled to the mind in immediate conſequence of an exertion of volition, but are ſuggeſted by ſome other circumſtances with which they are connected, independently of our will, by the laws of our conſtitution.

Not-

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NOTWITHSTANDING, however, the immediate dependence of the train of our thoughts on the laws of aſſociation, it muſt not be imagined that the will poſſeſſes no influence over it. This influence, indeed, is not exerciſed directly and immediately, as we are apt to ſuppoſe, on a ſuperficial view of the ſubject: but it is, nevertheleſs, very extenſive in its effects; and the different degrees in which it is poſſeſſed by different individuals, conſtitute ſome of the moſt ſtriking inequalities among men, in point of intellectual capacity.

OF the powers which the mind poſſeſſes over the train of its thoughts, the moſt obvious is its power of ſingling out any one of them at pleaſure; of detaining it; and of making it a particular object of attention. By doing ſo, we not only ſtop the ſucceſſion that would otherwiſe take place; but, in conſequence of our bringing to view the leſs obvious relations among our ideas, we frequently divert the current of our thoughts into a new channel. If, for example, when I am indolent and inactive, the name of Sir Iſaac Newton accidentally occur to me, it will perhaps ſuggeſt, one after another, the names of ſome other eminent mathematicians and aſtronomers, or of ſome of his illuſtrious cotemporaries and friends: and a number of them may paſs in review before me, without engaging my curioſity in any conſiderable degree. In a different ſtate of mind, the name of Newton will lead my thoughts to the principal incidents of his life, and the more ſtriking features of his character: or, if my mind be ardent and vigorous, will lead my attention to the ſublime diſcoveries he made; and gradually engage me in

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ſome philoſophical inveſtigation. To every object, there are others which bear obvious and ſtriking relations; and others, alſo, whoſe relation to it does not readily occur to us, unleſs we dwell upon it for ſome time, and place it before us in different points of view.

BUT the principal power we poſſeſs over the train of our ideas, is founded on the influence which our habits of thinking have on the laws of Aſſociation; an influence which is ſo great, that we may often form a pretty ſhrewd judgment concerning a man's prevailing turn of thought, from the tranſitions he makes in converſation or in writing. It is well known, too, that, by means of habit, a particular aſſociating principle may be ſtrengthened to ſuch a degree, as to give us a command of all the different ideas in our mind, which have a certain relation to each other; ſo that when any one of the claſs occurs to us, we have almoſt a certainty that it will ſuggeſt the reſt. What confidence in his own powers, muſt a ſpeaker poſſeſs, when he riſes without premeditation, in a popular aſſembly, to amuſe his audience with a lively or an humorous ſpeech! Such a confidence, it is evident, can only ariſe from a long experience of the ſtrength of particular aſſociating principles.

To how great a degree this part of our conſtitution may be influenced by habit, appears from facts which are familiar to every one. A man who has an ambition to become a punſter, ſeldom or never fails in the attainment of his object; that is, he ſeldom or never fails in acquiring a power which other

other men have not, of ſummoning up, on a particular occaſion, a number of words different from each other in meaning, and reſembling each other more or leſs in ſound. I am inclined to think that even genuine wit is a habit acquired in a ſimilar way; and that, although ſome individuals may, from natural conſtitution, be more fitted than others to acquire this habit; it is founded in every caſe on a peculiarly ſtrong aſſociation among certain claſſes of our ideas, which gives the perſon who poſſeſſes it, a command over thoſe ideas which is denied to ordinary men. But there is no inſtance in which the effect of habits of aſſociation is more remarkable, than in thoſe men who poſſeſs a facility of rhyming. That a man ſhould be able to expreſs his thoughts perſpicuouſly and elegantly, under the reſtraints which rhyme impoſes, would appear to be incredible, if we did not know it to be fact. Such a power implies a wonderful command both of ideas and of expreſſions; and yet daily experience ſhews, that it may be gained with very little practice. Pope tells us with reſpect to himſelf, that he could expreſs himſelf not only more conciſely, but more eaſily, in rhyme than in proſe *.

NOR is it only in theſe trifling accompliſhments that we may trace the influence of habits of aſſociation. In every inſtance of invention, either in the fine arts, in the mechanical arts, or

* "When habit is once gained, nothing ſo eaſy as practice. Cicero writes, "that Antipater the Sidonian could pour forth hexameters extempore; and "that, whenever he choſe to verſify, words followed him of courſe. We may "add to Antipater, the antient rhapſodiſts of the Greeks, and the modern im-"proviſatori of the Italians." HARRIS's Phil. Inq. 109, 110.

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in the ſciences, there is ſome new idea, or ſome new combination of ideas, brought to light by the inventor. This, undoubtedly, may often happen in a way which he is unable to explain; that is, his invention may be ſuggeſted to him by ſome lucky thought, the origin of which he is unable to trace. But when a man poſſeſſes a habitual fertility of invention in any particular art or ſcience, and can rely, with confidence, on his inventive powers, whenever he is called upon to exert them, he muſt have acquired, by previous habits of ſtudy, a command over certain claſſes of his ideas, which enables him, at pleaſure, to bring them under his review. The illuſtration of theſe ſubjects will, I flatter myſelf, throw light on ſome proceſſes of the mind, which are not in general well underſtood; and I ſhall, accordingly, in the following Section, offer a few hints, with reſpect to thoſe habits of aſſociation which are the foundation of wit; of the power of rhyming; of poetical fancy; and of invention in matters of ſcience.

SECTION IV.

Illuſtrations of the Doctrine ſtated in the preceding Section.

I. *Of Wit.*

ACCORDING to Locke, Wit conſiſts "in the aſſemblage "of ideas; and putting thoſe together with quickneſs "and variety, wherein can be found any reſemblance or con- "gruity *." I would add to this definition, (rather by way of explanation than amendment,) that Wit implies a power of calling up at pleaſure the ideas which it combines: and I am inclined to believe, that the entertainment which it gives to the hearer, is founded, in a conſiderable degree, on his ſurpriſe, at the command which the man of wit has acquired over a part of the conſtitution, which is ſo little ſubject to the will.

THAT the effect of wit depends partly, at leaſt, on the circumſtance now mentioned, appears evidently from this, that we are more pleaſed with a *bon mot*, which occurs in converſation, than with one in print; and that we never fail to receive diſguſt from wit, when we ſuſpect it to be premeditated. The pleaſure, too, we receive from wit, is heightened, when the original idea is ſtarted by one perſon, and the related idea by another. Dr. Campbell has remarked, that, "a witty "repartee is infinitely more pleaſing, than a witty attack; and

* Eſſay on Human Underſtanding, book ii. chap. 11.

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" that an alluſion will appear excellent when thrown out ex-
" tempore in converſation, which would be deemed execrable
" in print." In all theſe caſes, the wit conſidered abſolutely is the ſame. The relations which are diſcovered between the compared ideas are equally new: and yet, as ſoon as we ſuſpect that the wit was premeditated, the pleaſure we receive from it is infinitely diminiſhed. Inſtances indeed may be mentioned, in which we are pleaſed with contemplating an unexpected relation between ideas, without any reference to the habits of aſſociation in the mind of the perſon who diſcovered it. A *bon mot* produced at the game of croſs-purpoſes, would not fail to create amuſement; but in ſuch caſes, our pleaſure ſeems chiefly to ariſe from the ſurpriſe we feel at ſo extraordinary a coincidence between a queſtion and an anſwer coming from perſons who had no direct communication with each other.

I BEFORE obſerved, that the pleaſure we receive from wit is increaſed, when the two ideas between which the relation is diſcovered, are ſuggeſted by different perſons. In the caſe of a *bon mot* occurring in converſation, the reaſon of this is abundantly obvious; becauſe, when the related ideas are ſuggeſted by different perſons, we have a proof that the wit was not premeditated. But even in a written compoſition, we are much more delighted when the ſubject was furniſhed to the author by another perſon, than when he chuſes the topic on which he is to diſplay his wit. How much would the pleaſure we receive from the *Key to the Lock* be diminiſhed, if we ſuſpected that the author had the key in view when he wrote that poem; and that he introduced ſome expreſſions, in order to furniſh a ſubject for the

the wit of the commentator? How totally would it deſtroy the pleaſure we receive from a parody on a poem, if we ſuſpected that both were productions of the ſame author? The truth ſeems to be, that when both the related ideas are ſuggeſted by the ſame perſon, we have not a very ſatisfactory proof of any thing uncommon in the intellectual habits of the author. We may ſuſpect that both ideas occurred to him at the ſame time; and we know that in the dulleſt and moſt phlegmatic minds, ſuch extraordinary aſſociations will ſometimes take place. But when the ſubject of the wit is furniſhed by one perſon, and the wit ſuggeſted by another, we have a proof, not only that the author's mind abounds with ſuch ſingular aſſociations, but that he has his wit perfectly at command.

As an additional confirmation of theſe obſervations, we may remark, that the more an author is limited by his ſubject, the more we are pleaſed with his wit. And, therefore, the effect of wit does not ariſe ſolely from the unexpected relations which it preſents to the mind, but ariſes, in part, from the ſurpriſe it excites at thoſe intellectual habits which give it birth. It is evident, that the more the author is circumſcribed in the choice of his materials, the greater muſt be the command which he has acquired over thoſe aſſociating principles on which wit depends, and of conſequence, according to the foregoing doctrine, the greater muſt be the ſurpriſe and the pleaſure which his wit produces. In Addiſon's celebrated verſes to Sir Godfrey Kneller on his picture of George the Firſt, in which he compares the painter to Phidias, and the ſubjects of his pencil to the Grecian Deities, the range of the Poet's wit was neceſſarily confined within very narrow bounds; and what princi-

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pally delights us in that performance is, the ſurpriſing eaſe and felicity with which he runs the parallel between the Engliſh hiſtory and the Greek mythology. Of all the alluſions which the following paſſage contains, there is not one, taken ſingly, of very extraordinary merit; and yet the effect of the whole is uncommonly great, from the ſingular power of combination, which ſo long and ſo difficult an exertion diſcovers.

" Wiſe Phidias thus, his ſkill to prove,
" Thro' many a god advanced to Jove,
" And taught the poliſh'd rocks to ſhine
" With airs and lineaments divine,
" Till Greece amaz'd and half afraid,
" Th' aſſembled Deities ſurvey'd.
" Great Pan, who wont to chaſe the fair,
" And lov'd the ſpreading oak, was there;
" Old Saturn, too, with up-caſt eyes,
" Beheld his abdicated ſkies;
" And mighty Mars for war renown'd,
" In adamantine armour frown'd;
" By him the childleſs Goddeſs roſe,
" Minerva, ſtudious to compoſe
" Her twiſted threads; the web ſhe ſtrung,
" And o'er a loom of marble hung;
" Thetis, the troubled ocean's queen,
" Match'd with a mortal next was ſeen,
" Reclining on a funeral urn,
" Her ſhort-lived darling ſon to mourn;
" The laſt was he, whoſe thunder flew
" The Titan-race, a rebel crew,
" That from a hundred hills ally'd,
" In impious league their King defy'd."

ACCORDING

ACCORDING to the view which I have given of the nature of Wit, it preſuppoſes not only peculiar habits of aſſociation, but a mind ſtored with a great variety of ideas: and, accordingly, it has been remarked by Dr. Warton *, that "the chief of "thoſe who have excelled in works of wit and humour, have "been men of extenſive learning." He inſtances Lucian, Cervantes, Quevedo, Rabelais, Butler, and the members of the Scriblerus club.

II. *Of Rhyme.*

THE pleaſure we receive from rhyme, ſeems alſo to ariſe, partly, from our ſurpriſe at the command which the Poet muſt have acquired over the train of his ideas, in order to be able to expreſs himſelf with elegance, and the appearance of eaſe, under the reſtraint which rhyme impoſes. In witty or in humorous performances, this ſurpriſe ſerves to enliven that which the wit or the humour produces, and renders its effects more ſenſible. How flat do the livelieſt and moſt ludicrous thoughts appear in blank verſe? And how wonderfully is the wit of Pope heightened, by the eaſy and happy rhymes in which it is expreſſed?

IT muſt not, however, be imagined, either in the caſe of wit or of rhyme, that the pleaſure ariſes ſolely from our ſurpriſe at the uncommon habits of aſſociation which the author diſcovers. In the former caſe, there muſt be preſented to the mind,

* Eſſay on the Genius and Writings of POPE.

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an unexpected analogy or relation between different ideas: and perhaps other circumſtances muſt concur to render the wit perfect. If the combination has no other merit than that of bringing together two ideas which never met before, we may be ſurpriſed at its oddity, but we do not conſider it as a proof of wit. On the contrary, the want of any analogy or relation between the combined ideas, leads us to ſuſpect, that the one did not ſuggeſt the other, in conſequence of any habits of aſſociation; but that the two were brought together by ſtudy, or by mere accident. All that I affirm is, that when the analogy or relation is pleaſing in itſelf, our pleaſure is heightened by our ſurpriſe at the author's habits of aſſociation when compared with our own. In the caſe of Rhyme, too, there is undoubtedly a certain degree of pleaſure ariſing from the recurrence of the ſame ſound. We frequently obſerve children amuſe themſelves with repeating over ſingle words which rhyme together: and the lower people, who derive little pleaſure from poetry, excepting in ſo far as it affects the ear, are ſo pleaſed with the echo of the rhymes, that when they read verſes where it is not perfect, they are apt to ſupply the Poet's defects, by violating the common rules of pronunciation. This pleaſure, however, is heightened by our admiration at the miraculous powers which the Poet muſt have acquired over the train of his ideas, and over all the various modes of expreſſion which the language affords, in order to convey inſtruction and entertainment, without tranſgreſſing the eſtabliſhed laws of regular verſification. In ſome of the lower kinds of poetry; for example, in acroſtics, and in the lines which are adapted to

Bouts-rimés, the merit lies entirely in this command of thought and expreſſion; or in other words, in a command of ideas founded on extraordinary habits of aſſociation. Even ſome authors of a ſuperior claſs, occaſionally ſhew an inclination to diſplay their knack at rhyming, by introducing, at the end of the firſt line of a couplet, ſome word to which the language hardly affords a correſponding ſound. Swift, in his more trifling pieces, abounds with inſtances of this; and in Hudibras, when the author uſes his double and triple rhymes, many couplets have no merit whatever but what ariſes from difficulty of execution.

THE pleaſure we receive from rhyme in ſerious compoſitions, ariſes from a combination of different circumſtances which my preſent ſubject does not lead me to inveſtigate particularly *. I am perſuaded, however, that it ariſes, in part, from our ſur-

* In Elegiac poetry, the recurrence of the ſame ſound, and the uniformity in the ſtructure of the verſification which this neceſſarily occaſions, are peculiarly ſuited to the inactivity of the mind, and to the ſlow and equable ſucceſſion of its ideas, when under the influence of tender or melancholy paſſions; and, accordingly, in ſuch caſes, even the Latin poets, though the genius of their language be very ill fitted for compoſitions in rhyme, occaſionally indulge themſelves in ſomething very nearly approaching to it.

> "Memnona ſi mater, mater ploravit Achillem,
> "Et tangant magnas triſtia fata Deas;
> "Flebilis indignos Elegeia ſolve capillos,
> "Ah nimis ex vero nunc tibi nomen erit."

Many other inſtances of the ſame kind might be produced from the Elegiac verſes of Ovid and Tibullus.

priſe-

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priſe at the Poet's habits of aſſociation, which enable him to convey his thoughts with eaſe and beauty, notwithſtanding the narrow limits within which his choice of expreſſion is confined. One proof of this is, that if there appear any mark of conſtraint, either in the ideas or in the expreſſion, our pleaſure is proportionally diminiſhed. The thoughts muſt ſeem to ſuggeſt each other, and the rhymes to be only an accidental circumſtance. The ſame remark may be made on the meaſure of the verſe. When in its greateſt perfection, it does not appear to be the reſult of labour, but to be dictated by nature, or prompted by inſpiration. In Pope's beſt verſes, the idea is expreſſed with as little inverſion of ſtyle, and with as much conciſeneſs, preciſion, and propriety, as the author could have attained, had he been writing proſe: without any apparent exertion on his part, the words ſeem ſpontaneouſly to arrange themſelves in the moſt muſical numbers.

> "While ſtill a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> "I liſp'd in numbers, for the numbers came."

This facility of verſification, it is true, may be, and probably is, in moſt caſes, only apparent: and it is reaſonable to think, that in the moſt perfect poetical productions, not only the choice of words, but the choice of ideas, is influenced by the rhymes. In a proſe compoſition, the author holds on in a direct courſe, according to the plan he has previouſly formed; but in a poem, the rhymes which occur to him are perpetually diverting him to the right hand or to the left, by ſuggeſting ideas which do not naturally riſe out of his ſubject. This, I preſume, is Butler's meaning in the following couplet:

"Rhymes

" Rhymes the rudder are of verſes
" With which, like ſhips, they ſteer their courſes."

But although this may be the caſe in fact, the Poet muſt employ all his art to conceal it: inſomuch that, if he finds himſelf under a neceſſity to introduce, on account of the rhymes, a ſuperfluous idea, or an awkward expreſſion, he muſt place it in the firſt line of the couplet, and not in the ſecond; for the reader, naturally preſuming that the lines were compoſed in the order in which the author arranges them, is more apt to ſuſpect the ſecond line to be accommodated to the firſt, than the firſt to the ſecond. And this ſlight artifice is, in general, ſufficient to *impoſe on that degree of attention with which poetry is read.* Who can doubt that, in the following lines, Pope wrote the firſt for the ſake of the ſecond?

" A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
" An honeſt man's the nobleſt work of God."

Were the firſt of theſe lines, or a line equally unmeaning, placed laſt, the couplet would have appeared execrable to a perſon of the moſt moderate taſte.

It affords a ſtrong confirmation of the foregoing obſervations, that the Poets of ſome nations have delighted in the practice of alliteration, as well as of rhyme, and have even conſidered it as an eſſential circumſtance in verſification. Dr. Beattie obſerves, that " ſome antient Engliſh poems are more diſtinguiſhed " by alliteration, than by any other poetical contrivance. In " the works of Langland, even when no regard is had to " rhyme,

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" rhyme, and but little to a rude ſort of anapeſtic meaſure, it " ſeems to have been a rule, that three words, at leaſt, of each " line ſhould begin with the ſame letter." A late author informs us, that, in the Icelandic poetry, alliteration is conſidered as a circumſtance no leſs eſſential than rhyme *. He mentions alſo ſeveral other reſtraints, which muſt add wonderfully to the difficulty of verſification; and which appear to us to be perfectly arbitrary and capricious. If that really be the caſe, the whole pleaſure of the reader or hearer ariſes from his ſurpriſe at the facility of the Poet's compoſition under theſe complicated reſtraints; that is, from his ſurpriſe at the command which the Poet has acquired over his thoughts and expreſſions. In our rhyme, I acknowledge, that the coincidence of ſound is agreeable in itſelf; and only affirm, that the pleaſure which the ear receives from it, is heightened by the other conſideration.

III. *Of Poetical Fancy.*

THERE is another habit of aſſociation, which, in ſome men, is very remarkable; that which is the foundation of Poetical Fancy: a talent which agrees with Wit in ſome circumſtances, but which differs from it eſſentially in others.

* " The Icelandic poetry requires two things; viz. words with the ſame " initial letters, and words of the ſame ſound. It was divided into ſtanzas, " each of which conſiſted of four couplets; and each of theſe couplets was " again compoſed of two hemiſticks, of which every one contained ſix ſyl- " lables; and it was not allowed to augment this number, except in caſes of the " greateſt neceſſity." See VAN TROIL's Letters on Iceland, p. 208.

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THE pleaſure we receive from Wit, agrees in one particular with the pleaſure which ariſes from poetical alluſions; that in both caſes we are pleaſed with contemplating an analogy between two different ſubjects. But they differ in this, that the man of Wit has no other aim than to combine analogous ideas*; whereas no alluſion can, with propriety, have a place in ſerious poetry, unleſs it either illuſtrate or adorn the principal ſubject. If it has both theſe recommendations, the alluſion is perfect. If it has neither, as is often the caſe with the alluſions of Cowley and of Young, the Fancy of the Poet degenerates into Wit.

IF theſe obſervations be well-founded, they ſuggeſt a rule with reſpect to poetical alluſions, which has not always been ſufficiently attended to. It frequently happens, that two ſubjects bear an analogy to each other in more reſpects than one; and where ſuch can be found, they undoubtedly furniſh the moſt favourable of all occaſions for the diſplay of Wit. But, in ſerious poetry, I am inclined to think, that however ſtriking theſe analogies may be; and although each of them might, with propriety, be made the foundation of a ſeparate alluſion; it is improper, in the courſe of the ſame alluſion, to include more than one of them; as, by doing ſo, an author diſcovers an affectation of Wit, or a deſire of tracing analogies, inſtead of illuſtrating or adorning the ſubject of his compoſition.

I FORMERLY defined Fancy to be a power of aſſociating ideas according to relations of reſemblance and analogy. This defi-

* I ſpeak here of pure and unmixed wit, and not of wit, blended, as it is moſt commonly, with ſome degree of humour.

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nition will probably be thought too general; and to approach too near to that given of Wit. In order to diſcover the neceſſary limitations, we ſhall conſider what the circumſtances are, which pleaſe us in poetical alluſions. As theſe alluſions are ſuggeſted by Fancy, and are the moſt ſtriking inſtances in which it diſplays itſelf, the received rules of Critics with reſpect to them, may throw ſome light on the mental power which gives them birth.

1. An alluſion pleaſes, by illuſtrating a ſubject comparatively obſcure. Hence, I apprehend, it will be found, that alluſions from the intellectual world to the material, are more pleaſing, than from the material world to the intellectual. Maſon, in his Ode to Memory, compares the influence of that faculty over our ideas, to the authority of a general over his troops:

——" thou, whoſe ſway
" The throng'd ideal hoſts obey;
" Who bidſt their ranks now vaniſh, now appear,
" Flame in the van, or darken in the rear."

Would the alluſion have been equally pleaſing, from a general marſhalling his ſoldiers, to Memory and the ſucceſſion of ideas?

The effect of a literal and ſpiritleſs tranſlation of a work of genius, has been compared to that of the figures which we ſee, when we look at the wrong ſide of a beautiful piece of tapeſtry. The alluſion is ingenious and happy; but the pleaſure which

we receive from it ariſes, not merely from the analogy which it preſents to us, but from the illuſtration which it affords of the author's idea. No one, ſurely, in ſpeaking of a piece of tapeſtry, would think of comparing the difference between its ſides, to that between an original compoſition and a literal tranſlation!

CICERO, and after him Mr. Locke, in illuſtrating the difficulty of attending to the ſubjects of our conſciouſneſs, have compared the Mind to the Eye, which ſees every object around it, but is inviſible to itſelf. To have compared the eye, in this reſpect, to the mind, would have been abſurd.

MR. POPE's compariſon of the progreſs of youthful curioſity, in the purſuits of ſcience, to that of a traveller among the Alps, has been much, and juſtly, admired. How would the beauty of the alluſion have been diminiſhed, if the Alps had furniſhed the original ſubject, and not the illuſtration!

BUT although this rule holds, in general, I acknowledge, that inſtances may be produced, from our moſt celebrated poetical performances, of alluſions from material objects, both to the intellectual and the moral worlds. Theſe, however, are comparatively few in number, and are not to be found in deſcriptive or in didactic works; but in compoſitions written under the influence of ſome particular paſſion, or which are meant to expreſs ſome peculiarity in the mind of the author. Thus, a melancholy man, who has met with many misfortunes in life, will be apt to moralize on every phyſical event, and every appearance of nature; becauſe his atten-

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tion dwells more habitually on human life and conduct, than on the material objects around him. This is the case with the banished Duke, in Shakespeare's *As you like it*, who, in the language of that Poet,

> " Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> " Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

But this is plainly a distempered state of the mind; and the allusions please us, not so much by the analogies they present to us, as by the picture they give of the character of the person to whom they have occurred.

2. AN allusion pleases, by presenting a new and beautiful image to the mind. The analogy or the resemblance between this image and the principal subject, is agreeable of itself, and is indeed necessary, to furnish an apology for the transition which the writer makes; but the pleasure is wonderfully heightened, when the new image thus presented is a beautiful one. The following allusion, in one of Mr. Home's Tragedies, appears to me to unite almost every excellence:

> ——" Hope and fear, alternate, sway'd his breast;
> " Like light and shade upon a waving field,
> " Coursing each other, when the flying clouds
> " Now hide, and now reveal, the Sun."

HERE the analogy is remarkably perfect; not only between light and hope, and between darkness and fear; but between the

the rapid ſucceſſion of light and ſhade, and the momentary influences of theſe oppoſite emotions: and, at the ſame time, the new image which is preſented to us, is one of the moſt beautiful and ſtriking in nature.

THE foregoing obſervations ſuggeſt a reaſon why the principal ſtores of Fancy are commonly ſuppoſed to be borrowed from the material world. Wit has a more extenſive province, and delights to make new combinations, whatever be the nature of the compared ideas: but the favourite excurſions of Fancy, are from intellectual and moral ſubjects to the appearances with which our ſenſes are converſant. The truth is, that ſuch allu*ſions pleaſe more than any others in poetry. According to this* limited idea of Fancy, it preſuppoſes, where it is poſſeſſed in an eminent degree, an extenſive obſervation of natural objects, and a mind ſuſceptible of ſtrong impreſſions from them. It is thus only that a ſtock of images can be acquired; and that theſe images will be ready to preſent themſelves, whenever any analogous ſubject occurs. And hence probably it is, that poetical genius is almoſt always united with an exquiſite ſenſibility to the beauties of nature.

BEFORE leaving the ſubject of Fancy, it may not be improper to remark, that its two qualities are, livelineſs and luxuriancy. The word *lively* refers to the quickneſs of the aſſociation. The word *rich* or *luxuriant* to the variety of aſſociated ideas.

IV. *Of*

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IV. *Of Invention in the Arts and Sciences.*

TO theſe powers of Wit and Fancy, that of Invention in the Arts and Sciences has a ſtriking reſemblance. Like them it implies a command over certain claſſes of ideas, which, in ordinary men, are not equally ſubject to the will: and like them, too, it is the reſult of acquired habits, and not the original gift of nature.

OF the proceſs of the mind in ſcientific invention, I propoſe afterwards to treat fully, under the article of Reaſoning; and I ſhall therefore confine myſelf at preſent to a few detached remarks upon ſome views of the ſubject which are ſuggeſted by the foregoing inquiries.

BEFORE we proceed, it may be proper to take notice of the diſtinction between Invention and Diſcovery. The object of the former, as has been frequently remarked, is to produce ſomething which had no exiſtence before; that of the latter, to bring to light ſomething which did exiſt, but which was concealed from common obſervation. Thus we ſay, Otto Guerricke invented the air-pump; Sanctorius invented the thermometer; Newton and Gregory invented the reflecting teleſcope: Galileo diſcovered the ſolar ſpots; and Harvey diſcovered the circulation of the blood. It appears, therefore, that improvements in the Arts are properly called *inventions*; and that facts brought to light by means of obſervation, are properly called *diſcoveries*.

AGREEABLE

AGREEABLE to this analogy, is the uſe which we make of theſe words, when we apply them to ſubjects purely intellectual. As truth is eternal and immutable, and has no dependence on our belief or diſbelief of it, a perſon who brings to light a truth formerly unknown, is ſaid to make a diſcovery. A perſon, on the other hand, who contrives a new method of diſcovering truth, is called an inventor. Pythagoras, we ſay, diſcovered the forty-ſeventh propoſition of Euclid's firſt book; Newton diſcovered the binomial theorem: but he invented the method of prime and ultimate ratios; and he invented the method of fluxions.

IN general, every advancement in knowledge is conſidered as a diſcovery; every contrivance by which we produce an effect, or accompliſh an end, is conſidered as an invention. Diſcoveries in ſcience, therefore, unleſs they are made by accident, imply the exerciſe of invention; and, accordingly, the word *invention* is commonly uſed to expreſs originality of genius in the Sciences, as well as in the Arts. It is in this general ſenſe that I employ it in the following obſervations.

IT was before remarked, that in every inſtance of invention, there is ſome new idea, or ſome new combination of ideas, which is brought to light by the inventor; and that, although this may ſometimes happen, in a way which he is unable to explain, yet when a man poſſeſſes an habitual fertility of invention in any particular Art or Science, and can rely, with confidence, on his inventive powers, whenever he is called upon to exert them; he muſt have acquired, by previous habits of ſtudy,

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ſtudy, a command over thoſe claſſes of his ideas, which are ſubſervient to the particular effort that he wiſhes to make. In what manner this command is acquired, it is not poſſible, perhaps, to explain completely; but it appears to me to be chiefly in the two following ways. In the firſt place, by his habits of ſpeculation, he may have arranged his knowledge in ſuch a manner as may render it eaſy for him to combine, at pleaſure, all the various ideas in his mind, which have any relation to the ſubject about which he is occupied: or ſecondly, he may have learned by experience, certain general rules, by means of which, he can direct the train of his thoughts into thoſe channels in which the ideas he is in queſt of may be moſt likely to occur to him.

1. THE former of theſe obſervations, I ſhall not ſtop to illuſtrate particularly, at preſent; as the ſame ſubject will occur afterwards, under the article of Memory. It is ſufficient for my purpoſe, in this Chapter, to remark, that as habits of ſpeculation have a tendency to claſſify our ideas, by leading us to refer particular facts and particular truths to general principles; and as it is from an approximation and compariſon of related ideas, that new diſcoveries in moſt inſtances reſult; the knowledge of the philoſopher, even ſuppoſing that it is not more extenſive, is arranged in a manner much more favourable to invention, than in a mind unaccuſtomed to ſyſtem.

How much invention depends on a proper combination of the materials of our knowledge, appears from the reſources which occur to men of the loweſt degree of ingenuity, when they

they are preſſed by any alarming difficulty and danger; and from the unexpected exertions made by very ordinary characters, when called to ſituations which rouſe their latent powers. In ſuch caſes, I take for granted, that neceſſity operates in producing invention, chiefly by concentrating the attention of the mind to one ſet of ideas; by leading us to view theſe in every light, and to combine them variouſly with each other. As the ſame idea may be connected with an infinite variety of others by different relations; it may, according to circumſtances, at one time, ſuggeſt one of theſe ideas, and, at another time, a different one. When we dwell long on the ſame idea, we obtain all the others to which it is any way related, and thus are furniſhed with materials on which our powers of judgment and reaſoning may be employed. The effect of the diviſion of labour, in multiplying mechanical contrivances, is to be explained partly on the ſame principle. It limits the attention to a particular ſubject, and familiariſes to the mind all the poſſible combinations of ideas which have any relation to it.

THESE obſervations ſuggeſt a remarkable difference between Invention and Wit. The former depends, in moſt inſtances, on a combination of thoſe ideas, which are connected by the leſs obvious principles of aſſociation; and it may be called forth in almoſt any mind by the preſſure of external circumſtances. The ideas which muſt be combined, in order to produce the latter, are chiefly ſuch as are aſſociated by thoſe ſlighter connexions which take place when the mind is careleſs and diſengaged. "If you "have real wit," ſays Lord Cheſterfield," "it will flow ſponta"neouſly, and you need not aim at it; for in that caſe, the

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"rule of the goſpel is reverſed; and it will prove, ſeek and "you ſhall not find." Agreeably to this obſervation, wit is promoted by a certain degree of intoxication, which prevents the exerciſe of that attention, which is neceſſary for invention in matters of Science. Hence too it is, that thoſe who have the reputation of Wits, are commonly men confident in their own powers, who allow the train of their ideas to follow, in a great meaſure, its natural courſe; and hazard, in company, every thing, good or bad, that occurs to them. Men of modeſty and taſte ſeldom attempt wit in a promiſcuous ſociety; or if they are forced to make ſuch an exertion, they are ſeldom ſucceſsful. Such men, however, in the circle of their friends, to whom they can unboſom themſelves without reſerve, are frequently the moſt amuſing and the moſt intereſting of companions; as the vivacity of their wit is tempered by a correct judgment, and refined manners; and as its effect is heightened by that ſenſibility and delicacy, with which we ſo rarely find it accompanied in the common intercourſe of life.

WHEN a man of wit makes an exertion to diſtinguiſh himſelf, his ſallies are commonly too far fetched to pleaſe. He brings his mind into a ſtate approaching to that of the inventor, and becomes rather ingenious than witty. This is often the caſe with the writers whom Johnſon diſtinguiſhes by the name of the Metaphyſical Poets.

THOSE powers of invention, which neceſſity occaſionally calls forth in uncultivated minds, ſome individuals poſſeſs habitually. The related ideas which, in the caſe of the former, are brought

brought together by the ſlow efforts of attention and recollection, preſent themſelves to the latter, in conſequence of a more ſyſtematical arrangement of their knowledge. The inſtantaneouſneſs with which ſuch remote combinations are effected, ſometimes appears ſo wonderful, that we are apt to aſcribe it to ſomething like inſpiration; but it muſt be remembered, that when any ſubject ſtrongly and habitually occupies the thoughts, it gives us an intereſt in the obſervation of the moſt trivial circumſtance which we ſuſpect to have any relation to it, however diſtant; and by thus rendering the common objects and occurrences which the accidents of life preſent to us, ſubſervient to one particular employment of the intellectual powers, eſtabliſhes in the memory a connection between our favourite purſuit, and all the materials with which experience and reflexion have ſupplied us for the farther proſecution of it.

II. I OBSERVED, in the ſecond place, that invention may be facilitated by general rules, which enable the inventor to direct the train of his thoughts into particular channels. Theſe rules (to aſcertain which, ought to be one principal object of the logician) will afterwards fall under my conſideration, when I come to examine thoſe intellectual proceſſes which are ſubſervient to the diſcovery of truth. At preſent, I ſhall confine myſelf to a few general remarks; in ſtating which, I have no other aim than to ſhew, to how great a degree invention depends on cultivation and habit, even in thoſe ſciences in which it is generally ſuppoſed, that every thing depends on natural genius.

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WHEN we conſider the geometrical diſcoveries of the antients, in the form in which they are exhibited in the greater part of the works which have ſurvived to our times, it is ſeldom poſſible for us to trace the ſteps by which they were led to their concluſions: and, indeed, the objects of this ſcience are ſo unlike thoſe of all others, that it is not unnatural for a perſon when he enters on the ſtudy, to be dazzled by its novelty, and to form an exaggerated conception of the genius of thoſe men who firſt brought to light ſuch a variety of truths, ſo profound and ſo remote from the ordinary courſe of our ſpeculations. We find, however, that even at the time when the antient analyſis was unknown to the moderns; ſuch mathematicians as had attended to the progreſs of the mind in the diſcovery of truth, concluded *a priori*, that the diſcoveries of the Greek geometers did not, at firſt, occur to them in the order in which they are ſtated in their writings. The prevailing opinion was, that they had been poſſeſſed of ſome ſecret method of inveſtigation, which they carefully concealed from the world; and that they publiſhed the reſult of their labours in ſuch a form, as they thought would be moſt likely to excite the admiration of their readers. "O quam bene foret," ſays *Petrus Nonius*, "ſi qui in ſcientiis mathematicis ſcripſerint authores, ſcripta "reliquiſſent inventa ſua eadem methodo, et per eoſdem diſ-"curſus, quibus ipſi in ea primum inciderunt; et non, ut in "mechanica loquitur Ariſtoteles de artificibus, qui nobis foris "oſtendunt ſuas quas fecerint machinas, ſed artificium abſcon-"dunt, ut magis appareant admirabiles. Eſt utique inventio "in arte qualibet diverſa multum a traditione: neque putan-"dum eſt plurimas Euclidis et Archimedis propoſitiones fuiſſe

"ab

" ab illis ea via inventas qua nobis illii pſas tradiderunt *." The revival of the antient analyſis, by ſome late mathematicians in this country, has, in part, juſtified theſe remarks, by ſhewing to how great a degree the inventive powers of the Greek geometers were aided by that method of inveſtigation; and by exhibiting ſome ſtriking ſpecimens of addreſs in the practical application of it.

THE ſolution of problems, indeed, it may be ſaid, is but one mode in which mathematical invention may be diſplayed. The diſcovery of new truths is what we chiefly admire in an original genius; and the method of analyſis gives us no ſatisfaction with reſpect to the proceſs by which they are obtained.

To remove this difficulty completely, by explaining all the various ways in which new theorems may be brought to light, would lead to inquiries foreign to this work. In order, however, to render the proceſs of the mind, on ſuch occaſions, a little leſs myſterious than it is commonly ſuppoſed to be; it may be proper to remark, that the moſt copious ſource of diſcoveries is the inveſtigation of problems; which ſeldom fails (even although we ſhould not ſucceed in the attainment of the object which we have in view) to exhibit to us ſome relations formerly unobſerved among the quantities which are under conſideration. Of ſo great importance is it to concentrate the attention to a particular ſubject, and to check that

* See ſome other paſſages to the ſame purpoſe, quoted from different writers, by Dr. Simſon, in the preface to his Reſtoration of the Loci Plani of Appollonius Pergæus, Glaſg. 1749.

wandering

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wandering and diſſipated habit of thought, which, in the caſe of moſt perſons, renders their ſpeculations barren of any profit either to themſelves or to others. Many theorems, too, have been ſuggeſted by analogy; many have been inveſtigated from truths formerly known by altering or by generaliſing the hypotheſis; and many have been obtained by a ſpecies of induction. An illuſtration of theſe various proceſſes of the mind would not only lead to new and curious remarks, but would contribute to diminiſh that blind admiration of original genius, which is one of the chief obſtacles to the improvement of ſcience.

THE hiſtory of natural philoſophy, before and after the time of Lord Bacon, affords another very ſtriking proof, how much the powers of invention and diſcovery may be aſſiſted by the ſtudy of method: and in all the ſciences, without exception, whoever employs his genius with a regular and habitual ſucceſs, plainly ſhews, that it is by means of general rules that his inquiries are conducted. Of theſe rules, there may be many which the inventor never ſtated to himſelf in words; and, perhaps, he may even be unconſcious of the aſſiſtance which he derives from them; but their influence on his genius appears unqueſtionably from the uniformity with which it proceeds; and in proportion as they can be aſcertained by his own ſpeculations, or collected by the logician from an examination of his reſearches, ſimilar powers of invention will be placed within the reach of other men, who apply themſelves to the ſame ſtudy.

THE following remarks, which a truly philoſophical artiſt has applied to painting, may be extended, with ſome trifling

 " alterations,

alterations, to all the different employments of our intellectual powers. CHAP. V.

" WHAT we now call *genius*, begins, not where rules, " abſtractedly taken, end; but where known, vulgar, and " trite rules have no longer any place. It muſt of neceſſity be, " that works of genius, as well as every other effect, as it " muſt have its cauſe, muſt likewiſe have its rules; it cannot " be by chance, that excellencies are produced with any con- " ſtancy, or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; " but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and ſuch " as are called men of genius, work, are either ſuch as they " diſcover by their own peculiar obſervation, or of ſuch a nice " texture as not eaſily to admit handling or expreſſing in " words.

" UNSUBSTANTIAL, however, as theſe rules may ſeem, " and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they " are ſtill ſeen and felt in the mind of the artiſt; and he " works from them with as much certainty, as if they were " embodied, as I may ſay, upon paper. It is true, theſe re- " fined principles cannot be always made palpable, like the " more groſs rules of Art; yet it does not follow, but that the " mind may be put in ſuch a train, that it ſhall perceive, by a " kind of ſcientific ſenſe, that propriety, which words can but " very feebly ſuggeſt *."

Diſcourſes by Sir Joſhua Reynolds.

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SECTION V.

Application of the Principles ſtated in the foregoing Sections of this Chapter, to explain the Phenomena of Dreaming.

WITH reſpect to the Phenomena of Dreaming, three different queſtions may be propoſed. Firſt; What is the ſtate of the *mind* in ſleep? or, in other words, what faculties then continue to operate, and what faculties are then ſuſpended? Secondly; how far do our dreams appear to be influenced by our bodily ſenſations; and in what reſpects do they vary, according to the different conditions of the body in health, and in ſickneſs? Thirdly; what is the change which ſleep produces on thoſe parts of the *body*, with which our mental operations are more immediately connected; and how does this change operate, in diverſifying, ſo remarkably, the phenomena which our minds then exhibit, from thoſe of which we are conſcious in our waking hours? Of theſe three queſtions, the firſt belongs to the Philoſophy of the Human Mind; and it is to this queſtion that the following inquiry is almoſt entirely confined. The ſecond is more particularly intereſting to the medical inquirer, and does not properly fall under the plan of this work. The third ſeems to me to relate to a ſubject, which is placed beyond the reach of the human faculties.

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It will be granted, that, if we could aſcertain the ſtate of the mind in ſleep, ſo as to be able to reſolve the various phenomena of dreaming into a ſmaller number of more general principles; and ſtill more, if we could reſolve them into one general fact; we ſhould be advanced a very important ſtep in our inquiries upon this ſubject; even although we ſhould find it impoſſible to ſhew, in what manner this change in the ſtate of the mind reſults from the change which ſleep produces in the ſtate of the body. Such a ſtep would at leaſt gratify, to a certain extent, that diſpoſition of our nature which prompts us to aſcend from particular facts to general laws; and which is the foundation of all our philoſophical reſearches: and, in the preſent inſtance, I am inclined to think, that it carries us as far as our imperfect faculties enable us to proceed.

In conducting this inquiry with reſpect to the ſtate of the mind in ſleep, it ſeems reaſonable to expect, that ſome light may be obtained, from an examination of the circumſtances which accelerate or retard its approach; for when we are diſpoſed to reſt, it is natural to imagine, that the ſtate of the mind approaches to its ſtate in ſleep, more nearly, than when we feel ourſelves alive and active, and capable of applying all our various faculties to their proper purpoſes.

In general, it may be remarked, that the approach of ſleep is accelerated by every circumſtance which diminiſhes or ſuſpends the exerciſe of the mental powers; and is retarded by every thing which has a contrary tendency. When we wiſh for ſleep, we naturally endeavour to withhold, as much as poſ-

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ſible, all the active exertions of the mind, by diſengaging our attention from every intereſting ſubject of thought. When we are diſpoſed to keep awake, we naturally fix our attention on ſome ſubject which is calculated to afford employment to our intellectual powers, or to rouſe and exerciſe the active principles of our nature.

It is well known, that there is a particular claſs of ſounds which compoſe us to ſleep. The hum of bees; the murmur of a fountain; the reading of an unintereſting diſcourſe; have this tendency in a remarkable degree. If we examine this claſs of ſounds, we ſhall find that it conſiſts wholly of ſuch as are fitted to withdraw the attention of the mind from its own thoughts; and are, at the ſame time, not ſufficiently intereſting, to engage its attention to themſelves.

It is alſo matter of common obſervation, that children and perſons of little reflexion, who are chiefly occupied about ſenſible objects, and whoſe mental activity is, in a great meaſure, ſuſpended, as ſoon as their perceptive powers are unemployed; find it extremely difficult to continue awake, when they are deprived of their uſual engagements. The ſame thing has been remarked of ſavages, whoſe time, like that of the lower animals, is almoſt completely divided between ſleep and their bodily exertions *.

FROM

* "The exiſtence of the Negro ſlaves in America, appears to participate "more of ſenſation than reflection. To this muſt be aſcribed, their diſpoſition "to

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FROM a conſideration of theſe facts, it ſeems reaſonable to conclude, that in ſleep thoſe operations of the mind are ſuſpended, which depend on our volition; for if it be certain, that before we fall aſleep, we muſt with-hold, as much as we are able, the exerciſe of all our different powers; it is ſcarcely to be imagined, that, as ſoon as ſleep commences, theſe powers ſhould again begin to be exerted. The more probable concluſion is, that when we are deſirous to procure ſleep, we bring both mind and body, as nearly as we can, into that ſtate in which they are to continue after ſleep commences. The difference, therefore, between the ſtate of the mind when we are inviting ſleep, and when we are actually aſleep, is this; that in the former caſe, although its active exertions be ſuſpended, we can renew them, if we pleaſe. In the other caſe, the will loſes its influence over all our powers both of mind and body; in conſequence of ſome phyſical alteration in the ſyſtem, which we ſhall never, probably, be able to explain.

IN order to illuſtrate this concluſion a little farther, it may be proper to remark, that if the ſuſpenſion of our voluntary operations in ſleep be admitted as a fact, there are only two ſuppoſitions which can be formed concerning its cauſe. The one is, that the power of volition is ſuſpended; the other, that the will loſes its influence over thoſe faculties of the mind, and thoſe members of the body, which, during our waking hours, are

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"to ſleep when abſtracted from their diverſions, and unemployed in their la-
"bour. An animal whoſe body is at reſt, and who does not reflect, muſt be
"diſpoſed to ſleep of courſe." *Notes on Virginia, by Mr.* JEFFERSON, p. 255.

CHAP. I. ſubjected to its authority. If it can be ſhewn, then, that the former ſuppoſition is not agreeable to fact, the truth of the latter ſeems to follow as a neceſſary conſequence.

1. THAT the power of volition is not ſuſpended during ſleep, appears from the efforts which we are conſcious of making while in that ſituation. We dream, for example, that we are in danger; and we attempt to call out for aſſiſtance. The attempt, indeed, is, in general, unſucceſsful; and the ſounds which we emit, are feeble and indiſtinct: but this only confirms, or, rather, is a neceſſary conſequence of the ſuppoſition, that, in ſleep, the connexion between the will and our voluntary operations, is diſturbed, or interrupted. The continuance of the power of volition is demonſtrated by the effort, however ineffectual.

IN like manner, in the courſe of an alarming dream, we are ſometimes conſcious of making an exertion to ſave ourſelves, by flight, from an apprehended danger; but in ſpite of all our efforts, we continue in bed. In ſuch caſes, we commonly dream, that we are attempting to eſcape, and are prevented by ſome external obſtacle; but the fact ſeems to be, that the body is, at that time, not ſubject to the will. In the diſturbed reſt which we ſometimes have when the body is indiſpoſed, the mind appears to retain ſome power over it; but as, even in theſe caſes, the motions which are made, conſiſt rather of a general agitation of the whole ſyſtem, than of the regular exertion of a particular member of it, with a view to produce a certain effect; it is reaſonable to conclude, that, in perfectly ſound ſleep,

ſleep, the mind, although it retains the power of volition, retains no influence whatever over the bodily organs.

2. THE ſame concluſion is confirmed by a different view of the ſubject. It is probable, as was already obſerved, that when we are anxious to procure ſleep, the ſtate into which we naturally bring the mind, approaches to its ſtate after ſleep commences. Now it is manifeſt, that the means which nature directs us to employ on ſuch occaſions, is not to ſuſpend the power of volition, but to ſuſpend the exertion of thoſe powers whoſe exerciſe depends on volition. If it were neceſſary that volition ſhould be ſuſpended before we fall aſleep, it would be impoſſible for us, by our own efforts, to haſten the moment of reſt. The very ſuppoſition of ſuch efforts is abſurd; for it implies a continued will to ſuſpend the acts of the will.

ACCORDING to the foregoing doctrine with reſpect to the ſtate of the mind in ſleep, the effect which is produced on our mental operations, is ſtrikingly analogous to that which is produced on our bodily powers. From the obſervations which have been already made, it is manifeſt, that in ſleep, the body is, in a very inconſiderable degree, if at all, ſubject to our command. The vital and involuntary motions, however, ſuffer no interruption, but go on as when we are awake, in conſequence of the operation of ſome cauſe unknown to us. In like manner, it would appear, that thoſe operations of the mind which depend on our volition are ſuſpended; while certain other operations are, at leaſt occaſionally, carried on. This analogy naturally ſuggeſts the idea, that *all* our mental operations, which are

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independent of our will, may continue during ſleep; and that the phenomena of dreaming may, perhaps, be produced by theſe, diverſified in their apparent effects, in conſequence of the ſuſpenſion of our voluntary powers.

If the appearances which the mind exhibits during ſleep, are found to be explicable on this general principle, it will poſſeſs all the evidence which the nature of the ſubject admits of.

It was formerly ſhewn, that the train of thought in the mind does not depend *immediately* on our will, but is regulated by certain general laws of aſſociation. At the ſame time, it appeared, that among the various ſubjects which thus ſpontaneouſly preſent themſelves to our notice, we have the power of ſingling out any one that we chuſe to conſider, and of making it a particular object of attention; and that by doing ſo, we not only can ſtop the train that would otherwiſe have ſucceeded, but frequently can divert the current of our thoughts into a new channel. It alſo appeared, that we have a power (which may be much improved by exerciſe) of recalling paſt occurrences to the memory, by a voluntary effort of recollection.

The *indirect* influence which the mind thus poſſeſſes over the train of its thoughts is ſo great, that during the whole time we are awake, excepting in thoſe caſes in which we fall into what is called a reverie, and ſuffer our thoughts to follow their natural courſe, the order of their ſucceſſion is always regulated more or leſs by the will. The will, indeed, in regulating the train

train of thought, can operate only (as I already ſhewed) by availing itſelf of the eſtabliſhed laws of aſſociation; but ſtill it has the power of rendering this train very different from what it would have been, if theſe laws had taken place without its interference.

FROM theſe principles, combined with the general fact which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh, with reſpect to the ſtate of the mind in ſleep, two obvious conſequences follow: Firſt, That when we are in this ſituation, the ſucceſſion of our thoughts, in ſo far as it depends on the laws of aſſociation, may be carried on by the operation of the ſame unknown cauſes by which it is produced while we are awake; and, Secondly, that the order of our thoughts, in theſe two ſtates of the mind, muſt be very different; inaſmuch as, in the one, it depends ſolely on the laws of aſſociation; and in the other, on theſe laws combined with our own voluntary exertions.

IN order to aſcertain how far theſe concluſions are agreeable to truth, it is neceſſary to compare them with the known phenomena of dreaming. For which purpoſe, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, Firſt, That the ſucceſſion of our thoughts in ſleep, is regulated by the ſame general laws of aſſociation, to which it is ſubjected while we are awake; and Secondly, That the circumſtances which diſcriminate dreaming from our waking thoughts, are ſuch as muſt neceſſarily ariſe from the ſuſpenſion of the influence of the will.

I. THAT the ſucceſſion of our thoughts in ſleep, is regulated by the ſame general laws of aſſociation, which influence the

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mind while we are awake, appears from the following conſiderations.

1. OUR dreams are frequently ſuggeſted to us by bodily ſenſations: and with theſe, it is well known, from what we experience while awake, that particular ideas are frequently very ſtrongly aſſociated. I have been told by a friend, that, having *occaſion*, in *conſequence* of an indiſpoſition, to apply a bottle of hot water to his feet when he went to bed, he dreamed that he was making a journey to the top of Mount Ætna, and that he found the heat of the ground almoſt inſupportable. Another perſon, having a bliſter applied to his head, dreamed that he was ſcalped by a party of Indians. I believe every one who is in the habit of dreaming, will recollect inſtances, in his own caſe, of a ſimilar nature.

2. OUR dreams are influenced by the prevailing temper of the mind; and vary, in their complexion, according as our habitual diſpoſition, at the time, inclines us to cheerfulneſs or to melancholy. Not that this obſervation holds without exception; but it holds ſo generally, as muſt convince us, that the ſtate of our ſpirits has ſome effect on our dreams, as well as on our waking thoughts. Indeed, in the latter caſe, no leſs than in the former, this effect may be counteracted, or modified, by various other circumſtances.

AFTER having made a narrow eſcape from any alarming danger, we are apt to awake, in the courſe of our ſleep, with ſudden ſtartings; imagining that we are drowning, or on the brink

brink of a precipice. A ſevere misfortune, which has affected the mind deeply, influences our dreams in a ſimilar way; and ſuggeſts to us a variety of adventures, analogous, in ſome meaſure, to that event from which our diſtreſs ariſes. Such, according to Virgil, were the dreams of the forſaken Dido. CHAP. V.

" ——— Agit ipſe furentem,
" In ſomnis ferus Æneas; ſemperque relinqui,
" Sola ſibi; ſemper longam incomitata videtur,
" Ire viam, et Tyrios deſertâ quærere terrâ."

3. OUR dreams are influenced by our prevailing habits of aſſociation while awake.

IN a former part of this work, I conſidered the extent of that power which the mind may acquire over the train of its thoughts; and I obſerved, that thoſe intellectual diverſities among men, which we commonly refer to peculiarities of genius, are, at leaſt in a great meaſure, reſolvable into differences in their habits of aſſociation. One man poſſeſſes a rich and beautiful fancy, which is at all times obedient to his will. Another poſſeſſes a quickneſs of recollection, which enables him, at a moment's warning, to bring together all the reſults of his paſt experience, and of his paſt reflections, which can be of uſe for illuſtrating any propoſed ſubject. A third can, without effort, collect his attention to the moſt abſtract queſtions in philoſophy; can perceive, at a glance, the ſhorteſt and the moſt effectual proceſs for arriving at the truth; and can baniſh from his mind every extraneous idea, which fancy or caſual aſſociation may ſuggeſt, to diſtract his thoughts, or to miſlead his judgment.

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A fourth unites all theſe powers in a capacity of perceiving truth with an almoſt intuitive rapidity; and in an eloquence which enables him to command, at pleaſure, whatever his memory and his fancy can ſupply, to illuſtrate and to adorn it. The occaſional exerciſe which ſuch men make of their powers, may undoubtedly be ſaid, in one ſenſe, to be unpremeditated or unſtudied; but they all indicate previous *habits* of meditation or *ſtudy*, as unqueſtionably, as the dexterity of the expert accountant, or the rapid execution of the profeſſional muſician.

FROM what has been ſaid, it is evident, that a train of thought which, in one man, would require a painful effort of ſtudy, may, in another, be almoſt ſpontaneous: nor is it to be doubted, that the reveries of ſtudious men, even when they allow, as much as they can, their thoughts to follow their own courſe, are more or leſs connected together by thoſe principles of aſſociation, which their favourite purſuits tend more particularly to ſtrengthen.

THE influence of the ſame habits may be traced diſtinctly in ſleep. There are probably few mathematicians, who have not dreamed of an intereſting problem, and who have not even fancied that they were proſecuting the inveſtigation of it with much ſucceſs. They whoſe ambition leads them to the ſtudy of eloquence, are frequently conſcious, during ſleep, of a renewal of their daily occupations; and ſometimes feel themſelves poſſeſſed of a fluency of ſpeech, which they never experienced before. The Poet, in his dreams, is tranſported into Elyſium, and

and leaves the vulgar and unſatisfactory enjoyments of humanity, to dwell in thoſe regions of enchantment and rapture, which have been created by the divine imaginations of Virgil and of Taſſo. CHAP. V.

" And hither Morpheus ſent his kindeſt dreams,
" Raiſing a world of gayer tinct and grace;
" O'er which were ſhadowy caſt Elyſian gleams,
" That play'd, in waving lights, from place to place,
" And ſhed a roſeate ſmile on Nature's face.
" Not Titian's pencil e'er could ſo array,
" So fleece with clouds the pure etherial ſpace;
" Ne could it e'er ſuch melting forms diſplay,
" As looſe on flowery beds all languiſhingly lay.

" No, fair illuſions! artful phantoms, no!
" My muſe will not attempt your fairy land:
" She has no colours, that like your's can glow;
" To catch your vivid ſcenes, too groſs her hand *."

As a farther proof that the ſucceſſion of our thoughts in dreaming, is influenced by our prevailing habits of aſſociation; it may be remarked, that the ſcenes and occurrences which moſt frequently preſent themſelves to the mind while we are aſleep, are the ſcenes and occurrences of childhood and early youth. The facility of aſſociation is then much greater than in more advanced years; and although, during the day, the memory of the events thus aſſociated, may be baniſhed by the objects and purſuits which preſs upon our ſenſes, it retains a

* Caſtle of Indolence.

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more permanent hold of the mind than any of our ſubſequent acquiſitions; and, like the knowledge which we poſſeſs of our mother tongue, is, as it were, interwoven and incorporated with all its moſt eſſential habits. Accordingly, in old men, whoſe thoughts are, in a great meaſure, diſengaged from the world, the tranſactions of their middle age, which once ſeemed ſo important, are often obliterated; while the mind dwells, as in a dream, on the ſports and the companions of their infancy.

I SHALL only obſerve farther, on this head, that in our dreams, as well as when awake, we occaſionally make uſe of words as an inſtrument of thought. Such dreams, however, do not affect the mind with ſuch emotions of pleaſure and of pain, as thoſe in which the imagination is occupied with particular objects of ſenſe. The effect of philoſophical ſtudies, in habituating the mind to the almoſt conſtant employment of this inſtrument, and of conſequence, its effect in weakening the imagination, was formerly remarked. If I am not miſtaken, the influence of theſe circumſtances may alſo be traced in the hiſtory of our dreams; which, in youth, commonly involve, in a much greater degree, the exerciſe of imagination; and affect the mind with much more powerful emotions, than when we begin to employ our maturer faculties in more general and abſtract ſpeculations.

FROM theſe different obſervations, we are authoriſed to conclude, that the ſame laws of aſſociation which regulate the train of our thoughts while we are awake, continue to operate during ſleep. I now proceed to conſider, how far the circumſtances

cumſtances which diſcriminate dreaming from our waking thoughts, correſpond with thoſe which might be expected to reſult from the ſuſpenſion of the influence of the will. CHAP. V.

1. If the influence of the will be ſuſpended during ſleep, all our voluntary operations, ſuch as recollection, reaſoning, &c. muſt alſo be ſuſpended.

That this really is the caſe, the extravagance and inconſiſtency of our dreams are ſufficient proofs. We frequently confound together times and places the moſt remote from each other; and, in the courſe of the ſame dream, conceive the ſame perſon as exiſting in different parts of the world. Sometimes we imagine ourſelves converſing with a dead friend, without remembering the circumſtance of his death, although, perhaps, it happened but a few days before, and affected us deeply. All this proves clearly, that the ſubjects which then occupy our thoughts, are ſuch as preſent themſelves to the mind ſpontaneouſly; and that we have no power of employing our reaſon in comparing together the different parts of our dreams; or even of exerting an act of recollection, in order to aſcertain how far they are conſiſtent and poſſible.

The proceſſes of reaſoning, in which we ſometimes fancy ourſelves to be engaged during ſleep, furniſh no exception to the foregoing obſervation; for although every ſuch proceſs, the firſt time we form it, implies volition; and, in particular, implies a recollection of the premiſes, till we arrive at the concluſion; yet when a number of truths have been often preſented

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to us as neceſſarily connected with each other, this ſeries may afterwards paſs through the mind, according to the laws of aſſociation, without any more activity on our part, than in thoſe trains of thought which are the moſt looſe and incoherent. Nor is this mere theory. I may venture to appeal to the conſciouſneſs of every man accuſtomed to dream, whether his reaſonings during ſleep do not ſeem to be carried on without any exertion of his will; and with a degree of facility, of which he was never conſcious while awake. Mr. Addiſon, in one of his Spectators, has made this obſervation; and his teſtimony, in the preſent inſtance, is of the greater weight, that he had no particular theory on the ſubject to ſupport. "There is not," (ſays he,) "a more painful action of the mind than invention, "yet in dreams, it works with that eaſe and activity, that we "are not ſenſible when the faculty is employed. For inſtance, "I believe every one, ſome time or other, dreams that he is "reading papers, books, or letters; in which caſe the inven- "tion prompts ſo readily, that the mind is impoſed on, and "miſtakes its own ſuggeſtions for the compoſition of ano- "ther *."

2. If the influence of the will during ſleep be ſuſpended, the mind will remain as paſſive, while its thoughts change from one ſubject to another, as it does during our waking hours, while different perceptible objects are preſented to our ſenſes.

Of this paſſive ſtate of the mind in our dreams, it is unneceſſary to multiply proofs; as it has always been conſidered as one

of

of the moſt extraordinary circumſtances with which they are accompanied. If our dreams, as well as our waking thoughts, were ſubject to the will, is it not natural to conclude, that, in the one caſe, as well as in the other, we would endeavour to baniſh, as much as we could, every idea which had a tendency to diſturb us; and detain thoſe only which we found to be agreeable? So far, however, is this power over our thoughts from being exerciſed, that we are frequently oppreſſed, in ſpite of all our efforts to the contrary, with dreams which affect us with the moſt painful emotions. And, indeed, it is matter of vulgar remark, that our dreams are, in every caſe, involuntary on our part; and that they appear to be obtruded on us by ſome external cauſe. This fact appeared ſo unaccountable to the late Mr. Baxter, that it gave riſe to his very whimſical theory, in which he aſcribes dreams to the immediate influence of ſeparate ſpirits on the mind.

3. If the influence of the will be ſuſpended during ſleep, the *conceptions* which we then form of ſenſible objects, will be attended with a belief of their real exiſtence, as much as the *perception* of the ſame objects is while we are awake.

In treating of the power of Conception, I formerly obſerved, that our belief of the ſeparate and independent exiſtence of the objects of our perceptions, is the reſult of experience; which teaches us that theſe perceptions do not depend on our will. If I open my eyes, I cannot prevent myſelf from ſeeing the proſpect before me. The caſe is different with reſpect to our conceptions. While they occupy the mind,

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to the excluſion of every thing elſe, I endeavoured to ſhew, that they are always accompanied with belief; but as we can baniſh them from the mind, during our waking hours, at pleaſure; and as the momentary belief which they produce, is continually checked by the ſurrounding objects of our perceptions, we learn to conſider them as fictions of our own creation; and, excepting in ſome accidental caſes, pay no regard to them in the conduct of life. If the doctrine, however, formerly ſtated with reſpect to conception be juſt, and if, at the ſame time, it be allowed, that ſleep ſuſpends the influence of the will over the train of our thoughts, we ſhould naturally be led to expect, that the ſame belief which accompanies perception while we are awake, ſhould accompany the conceptions which occur to us in our dreams. It is ſcarcely neceſſary for me to remark, how ſtrikingly this concluſion coincides with acknowledged facts.

MAY it not be conſidered as ſome confirmation of the foregoing doctrine, that when opium fails in producing complete ſleep, it commonly produces *one* of the effects of ſleep, by ſuſpending the activity of the mind, and throwing it into a reverie; and that while we are in this ſtate, our conceptions frequently affect us nearly in the ſame manner, as if the objects conceived were preſent to our ſenſes*?

ANOTHER circumſtance with reſpect to our conceptions during ſleep, deſerves our notice. As the ſubjects which we

* See the Baron de TOTT's Account of the Opium-takers at Conſtantinople.

then

then think upon, occupy the mind excluſively; and as the attention is not diverted by the objects of our external ſenſes, our conceptions muſt be proportionably lively and ſteady. Every perſon knows how faint the conception is which we form of any thing, with our eyes open, in compariſon of what we can form with our eyes ſhut: and that, in proportion as we can ſuſpend the exerciſe of all our other ſenſes, the livelineſs of our conception increaſes. To this cauſe is to be aſcribed, in part, the effect which the dread of ſpirits in the dark, has on ſome perſons, who are fully convinced in ſpeculation, that their apprehenſions are groundleſs; and to this alſo is owing, the effect of any accidental perception in giving them a momentary relief from their terrors. Hence the remedy which nature points out to us, when we find ourſelves overpowered by imagination. If every thing around us be ſilent, we endeavour to create a noiſe, by ſpeaking aloud, or beating with our feet; that is, we ſtrive to divert the attention from the ſubjects of our imagination, by preſenting an object to our powers of perception. The concluſion which I draw from theſe obſervations is, that, as there is no ſtate of the body in which our perceptive powers are ſo totally unemployed as in ſleep, it is natural to think, that the objects which we conceive or imagine, muſt then make an impreſſion on the mind, beyond compariſon greater, than any thing of which we can have experience while awake.

THE phenomena which we have hitherto explained, take place when ſleep ſeems to be nearly complete; that is, when the mind loſes its influence over *all* thoſe powers whoſe exerciſe depends on its will. There are, however, many caſes in

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which ſleep ſeems to be partial; that is, when the mind loſes its influence over *ſome* powers, and retains it over others. In the caſe of the *ſomnambuli*, it retains its power over the limbs, but it poſſeſſes no influence over its own thoughts, and ſcarcely any over the body; excepting thoſe particular members of it which are employed in walking. In madneſs, the power of the will over the body remains undiminiſhed, while its influence in regulating the train of thought is in a great meaſure ſuſpended; either in conſequence of a particular idea, which engroſſes the attention, to the excluſion of every thing elſe, and which we find it impoſſible to baniſh by our efforts; or in conſequence of our thoughts ſucceeding each other with ſuch rapidity, that we are unable to ſtop the train. In both of theſe kinds of madneſs, it is worthy of remark, that the conceptions or imaginations of the mind becoming independent of our will, they are apt to be miſtaken for actual perceptions, and to affect us in the ſame manner.

By means of this ſuppoſition of a partial ſleep, any apparent exceptions which the hiſtory of dreams may afford to the general principles already ſtated, admit of an eaſy explanation.

Upon reviewing the foregoing obſervations, it does not occur to me, that I have in any inſtance tranſgreſſed thoſe rules of philoſophiſing, which, ſince the time of Newton, are commonly appealed to, as the teſts of ſound inveſtigation. For, in the firſt place, I have not ſuppoſed any cauſes which are not known to exiſt; and ſecondly, I have ſhewn, that the phenomena under our conſideration are neceſſary conſequences of

of the cauſes to which I have referred them. I have not ſuppoſed, that the mind acquires in ſleep, any new faculty of which we are not conſcious while awake; but only (what we know to be a fact) that it retains ſome of its powers, while the exerciſe of others is ſuſpended: and I have deduced ſynthetically, the known phenomena of dreaming, from the operation of a particular claſs of our faculties, uncorrected by the operation of another. I flatter myſelf, therefore, that this inquiry will not only throw ſome light on the ſtate of the mind in ſleep; but that it will have a tendency to illuſtrate the mutual adaptation and ſubſerviency which exiſts among the different parts of our conſtitution, when we are in complete poſſeſſion of all the faculties and principles which belong to our nature *.

See Note [O].

CHAPTER FIFTH.

PART SECOND.

Of the Influence of Aſſociation on the Intellectual and on the Active Powers.

SECTION I.

Of the Influence of caſual Aſſociations on our ſpeculative Concluſions.

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THE Aſſociation of Ideas has a tendency to warp our ſpeculative opinions chiefly in the three following ways:

FIRST, by blending together in our apprehenſions, things which are really diſtinct in their nature; ſo as to introduce perplexity and error into every proceſs of reaſoning in which they are involved.

SECONDLY, by miſleading us in thoſe anticipations of the future from the paſt, which our conſtitution diſpoſes us to form, and which are the great foundation of our conduct in life.

THIRDLY,

THIRDLY, by connecting in the mind erroneous opinions, with truths which irreſiſtibly command our aſſent, and which we feel to be of importance to human happineſs.

A SHORT illuſtration of theſe remarks, will throw light on the origin of various prejudices; and may, perhaps, ſuggeſt ſome practical hints with reſpect to the conduct of the underſtanding.

I. I FORMERLY had occaſion to mention ſeveral inſtances of very intimate aſſociations formed between two ideas which have no neceſſary connexion with each other. One of the moſt remarkable is, that which exiſts in every perſon's mind between the notions of *colour* and of *extenſion*. The former of theſe words expreſſes (at leaſt in the ſenſe in which we commonly employ it) a ſenſation in the mind; the latter denotes a quality of an external object; ſo that there is, in fact, no more connexion between the two notions, than between thoſe of pain and of ſolidity*; and yet, in conſequence of our always perceiving extenſion, at the ſame time at which the ſenſation of colour is excited in the mind, we find it impoſſible to think of that ſenſation, without conceiving extenſion along with it.

ANOTHER intimate aſſociation is formed in every mind between the ideas of *ſpace* and of *time*. When we think of an

* See Note [P].

interval

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interval of duration, we always conceive it as ſomething analogous to a line, and we apply the ſame language to both ſubjects. We ſpeak of a *long* and *ſhort time*, as well as of a *long* and *ſhort diſtance*; and we are not conſcious of any metaphor in doing ſo. Nay, ſo very perfect does the analogy appear to us, that Boſcovich mentions it as a curious circumſtance, that extenſion ſhould have three dimenſions, and duration only one.

THIS apprehended analogy ſeems to be founded wholly on an aſſociation between the ideas of ſpace and of time, ariſing from our always meaſuring the one of theſe qualities by the other. We meaſure time by motion, and motion by extenſion. In an hour, the hand of the clock moves over a certain ſpace; in two hours, over double the ſpace; and ſo on. Hence the ideas of ſpace and of time become very intimately united, and we apply to the latter the words *long* and *ſhort*, *before* and *after*, in the ſame manner as to the former.

THE apprehended analogy between the relation which the different notes in the ſcale of muſic bear to each other, and the relation of ſuperiority and inferiority, in reſpect of poſition, among material objects, ariſes alſo from an accidental aſſociation of ideas.

WHAT this aſſociation is founded upon, I ſhall not take upon me to determine; but that it is the effect of accident, appears clearly from this, that it has not only been confined to particular

cular ages and nations; but is the very reverſe of an aſſociation which was once equally prevalent. It is obſerved by Dr. Gregory, in the preface to his edition of Euclid's works, that the more ancient of the Greek writers looked upon grave ſounds as high, and acute ones as low; and that the preſent mode of expreſſion on that ſubject, was an innovation introduced at a later period

In the inſtances which have now been mentioned, our habit of combining the notions of two things, becomes ſo ſtrong, that we find it impoſſible to think of the one, without thinking at the ſame time of the other. Various other examples of the ſame ſpecies of combination, although, perhaps, not altogether ſo ſtriking in degree, might eaſily be collected from the ſubjects about which our metaphyſical ſpeculations are employed. The *ſenſations*, for inſtance, which are excited in the mind by external objects, and the *perceptions* of material qualities which follow theſe ſenſations, are to be diſtinguiſhed from each other only by long habits of patient reflexion. A clear conception of this diſtinction may be regarded as the key to all Dr. Reid's reaſonings concerning the proceſs of nature in perception; and, till it has once been rendered familiar to the reader, a great part of his writings muſt appear unſatisfactory and obſcure.—In truth, our progreſs in the philoſophy of the human mind depends much more on that ſevere and diſcriminating judgment, which enables us to ſeparate ideas which nature or habit have intimately combined,

See Note [Q].

than

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than on acuteneſs of reaſoning or fertility of invention. And hence it is, that metaphyſical ſtudies are the beſt of all preparations for thoſe philoſophical purſuits which relate to the conduct of life. In none of theſe do we meet with caſual combinations ſo intimate and indiſſoluble as thoſe which occur in metaphyſics; and he who has been accuſtomed to ſuch diſcriminations as this ſcience requires, will not eaſily be impoſed on by that confuſion of ideas, which warps the judgments of the multitude in moral, religious, and political inquiries.

FROM the facts which have now been ſtated, it is eaſy to conceive the manner in which the aſſociation of ideas has a tendency to miſlead the judgment, in the firſt of the three caſes already enumerated. When two ſubjects of thought are ſo intimately connected together in the mind, that we find it ſcarcely poſſible to conſider them apart; it muſt require no common efforts of attention, to conduct any proceſs of reaſoning which relates to either. I formerly took notice of the errors to which we are expoſed in conſequence of the ambiguity of *words;* and of the neceſſity of frequently checking and correcting our general reaſonings by means of particular examples; but in the caſes to which I allude at preſent, there is (if I may uſe the expreſſion) an ambiguity of *things;* ſo that even when the mind is occupied about particulars, it finds it difficult to ſeparate the proper objects of its attention from others with which it has been long accuſtomed to blend them. The caſes, indeed, in which ſuch obſtinate and invincible aſſociations are formed among different ſubjects of thought, are not very numerous,

and occur chiefly in our metaphyſical reſearches; but in every mind, caſual combinations, of an inferior degree of ſtrength, have an habitual effect in diſturbing the intellectual powers, and are not to be conquered without perſevering exertions, of which few men are capable. The obvious effects which this tendency to combination produces on the judgment, in confounding together thoſe ideas which it is the province of the metaphyſician to diſtinguiſh, ſufficiently illuſtrate the mode of its operation in thoſe numerous inſtances, in which its influence, though not ſo complete and ſtriking, is equally real, and far more dangerous.

II. THE aſſociation of ideas is a ſource of ſpeculative error, by miſleading us in thoſe anticipations of the future from the paſt, which are the foundation of our conduct in life.

THE great object of philoſophy, as I have already remarked more than once, is to aſcertain the laws which regulate the ſucceſſion of events, both in the phyſical and moral worlds; in order that, when called upon to act in any particular combination of circumſtances, we may be enabled to anticipate the probable courſe of nature from our paſt experience, and to regulate our conduct accordingly.

As a knowledge of the eſtabliſhed connexions among events, is the foundation of ſagacity and of ſkill, both in the practical arts, and in the conduct of life, nature has not only given to all men a ſtrong diſpoſition to remark, with attention and curioſity, thoſe phenomena which have been obſerved to happen

nearly at the ſame time; but has beautifully adapted to the uniformity of her own operations, the laws of aſſociation in the human mind. By rendering *contiguity in time* one of the ſtrongeſt of our aſſociating principles, ſhe has conjoined together in our thoughts, the ſame events which we have found conjoined in our experience, and has thus accommodated (without any effort on our part) the order of our ideas to that ſcene in which we are deſtined to act.

THE degree of experience which is neceſſary for the preſervation of our animal exiſtence, is acquired by all men without any particular efforts of ſtudy. The laws of nature, which it is moſt material for us to know, are expoſed to the immediate obſervation of our ſenſes; and eſtabliſh, by means of the principle of aſſociation, a correſponding order in our thoughts, long before the dawn of reaſon and reflexion; or at leaſt long before that period of childhood, to which our recollection afterwards extends.

THIS tendency of the mind to aſſociate together events which have been preſented to it nearly at the ſame time; although, on the whole, it is attended with infinite advantages, yet, like many other principles of our nature, may occaſionally be a ſource of inconvenience, unleſs we avail ourſelves of our reaſon and of our experience in keeping it under proper regulation. Among the various phenomena which are continually paſſing before us, there is a great proportion, whoſe vicinity in time does not indicate a conſtancy of conjunction; and unleſs we be careful to make the diſtinction between theſe two claſſes

of

of connexions, the order of our ideas will be apt to correſpond with the one as well as with the other; and our unenlightened experience of the paſt, will fill the mind, in numberleſs inſtances, with vain expectations, or with groundleſs alarms, concerning the future. This diſpoſition to confound together accidental and permanent connexions, is one great ſource of popular ſuperſtitions. Hence the regard which is paid to unlucky days; to unlucky colours; and to the influence of the planets; apprehenſions which render human life, to many, a continued ſeries of abſurd terrors. Lucretius compares them to thoſe which children feel, from an idea of the exiſtence of ſpirits in the dark:

> " Ac veluti pueri trepidant, atque omnia cœcis
> " In tenebris metuunt, ſic nos, in luce timemus,
> " Interdum nihilo quæ ſunt metuenda magis."

Such ſpectres can be diſpelled by the light of philoſophy only; which, by accuſtoming us to trace eſtabliſhed connexions, teaches us to deſpiſe thoſe which are caſual; and, by giving a proper direction to that bias of the mind which is the foundation of ſuperſtition, prevents it from leading us aſtray.

In the inſtances which we have now been conſidering, events come to be combined together in the mind, merely from the accidental circumſtance of their contiguity in time, at the moment when we perceived them. Such combinations are confined, in a great meaſure, to uncultivated and unenlightened minds; or to thoſe individuals who, from nature or education, have a more than ordinary facility of aſſociation. But there

are other accidental combinations, which are apt to lay hold of the moſt vigorous underſtandings; and from which, as they are the natural and neceſſary reſult of a limited experience, no ſuperiority of intellect is ſufficient to preſerve a philoſopher, in the infancy of phyſical ſcience.

As the connexions among phyſical events are diſcovered to us by experience alone, it is evident, that when we ſee a phenomenon preceded by a number of different circumſtances, it is impoſſible for us to determine, by any reaſoning *a priori*, which of theſe circumſtances are to be regarded as the *conſtant*, and which as the *accidental*, antecedents of the effect. If, in the courſe of our experience, the ſame combination of circumſtances is always exhibited to us without any alteration, and is invariably followed by the ſame reſult, we muſt for ever remain ignorant, whether this reſult be connected with the whole combination, or with one or more of the circumſtances combined; and therefore, if we are anxious, upon any occaſion, to produce a ſimilar effect, the only rule that we can follow with perfect ſecurity, is to imitate in every particular circumſtance the combination which we have ſeen. It is only where we have an opportunity of ſeparating ſuch circumſtances from each other; of combining them variouſly together; and of obſerving the effects which reſult from theſe different experiments, that we can aſcertain with preciſion, the general laws of nature, and ſtrip phyſical cauſes of their accidental and uneſſential concomitants.

To illuſtrate this by an example. Let us ſuppoſe that a ſavage, who, in a particular inſtance, had found himſelf relieved of ſome bodily indiſpoſition by a draught of cold water, is a

ſecond time afflicted with a ſimilar diſorder, and is deſirous to repeat the ſame remedy. With the limited degree of experience which we have here ſuppoſed him to poſſeſs, it would be impoſſible for the acuteſt philoſopher, in his ſituation, to determine, whether the cure was owing to the water which was drunk, to the cup in which it was contained, to the fountain from which it was taken, to the particular day of the month, or to the particular age of the moon. In order, therefore, to enſure the ſucceſs of the remedy, he will very naturally, and very wiſely, copy, as far as he can recollect, every circumſtance which accompanied the firſt application of it. He will make uſe of the ſame cup, draw the water from the ſame fountain, hold his body in the ſame poſture, and turn his face in the ſame direction; and thus all the accidental circumſtances in which the firſt experiment was made, will come to be aſſociated equally in his mind with the effect produced. The fountain from which the water was drawn, will be conſidered as poſſeſſed of particular virtues; and the cup from which it was drunk, will be ſet apart from vulgar uſes, for the ſake of thoſe who may afterwards have occaſion to apply the remedy. It is the enlargement of experience alone, and not any progreſs in the art of reaſoning, which can cure the mind of theſe aſſociations, and free the practice of medicine from thoſe ſuperſtitious obſervances with which we always find it incumbered among rude nations.

MANY inſtances of this ſpecies of ſuperſtition might be produced from the works of philoſophers who have flouriſhed in more enlightened ages. In particular, many might be produced

duced from the writings of thoſe phyſical inquirers who immediately ſucceeded to Lord Bacon; and who, convinced by his arguments, of the folly of all reaſonings *a priori*, concerning the laws of nature, were frequently apt to run into the oppoſite extreme, by recording every circumſtance, even the moſt ludicrous, and the moſt obviouſly ineſſential, which attended their experiments *.

THE obſervations which have been hitherto made, relate entirely to aſſociations founded on caſual combinations of *material* objects, or of *phyſical* events. The effects which theſe aſſociations produce on the underſtanding, and which are ſo palpable, that they cannot fail to ſtrike the moſt careleſs obſerver, will prepare the reader for the remarks I am now to make, on ſome analogous prejudices which warp our opinions on ſtill more important ſubjects.

As the eſtabliſhed laws of the material world, which have been exhibited to our ſenſes from our infancy, gradually accommodate to themſelves the order of our thoughts; ſo the moſt arbitrary and capricious inſtitutions and cuſtoms, by a long and conſtant and excluſive operation on the mind, acquire ſuch an influence in forming the intellectual habits, that every deviation from them not only produces ſurpriſe, but is apt to excite ſenti-

* The reader will ſcarcely believe, that the following cure for a dyſentery is copied *verbatim* from the works of Mr. Boyle:

"Take the thigh-bone of a hanged man, (perhaps another may ſerve, but "this was ſtill made uſe of,) calcine it to whiteneſs, and having purged the "patient with an antimonial medicine, give him one dram of this white powder "for one doſe, in ſome good cordial, whether conſerve or liquor."

ments

ments of contempt and of ridicule. A perſon who has never extended his views beyond that ſociety of which he himſelf is a member, is apt to conſider many peculiarities in the manners and cuſtoms of his countrymen as founded on the univerſal principles of the human conſtitution; and when he hears of other nations, whoſe practices in ſimilar caſes are different, he is apt to cenſure them as unnatural, and to deſpiſe them as abſurd. There are two claſſes of men who have more particularly been charged with this weakneſs; thoſe who are placed at the bottom, and thoſe who have reached the ſummit of the ſcale of refinement; the former from ignorance, and the latter from national vanity.

For curing this claſs of prejudices, the obvious expedient which nature points out to us, is to extend our acquaintance with human affairs, either by means of books, or of perſonal obſervation. The effects of travelling, in enlarging and in enlightening the mind, are obvious to our daily experience; and ſimilar advantages may be derived (although, perhaps, not in an equal degree) from a careful ſtudy of the manners of paſt ages or of diſtant nations, as they are deſcribed by the hiſtorian. In making, however, theſe attempts for our intellectual improvement, it is of the utmoſt conſequence to us to vary, to a conſiderable degree, the objects of our attention; in order to prevent any danger of our acquiring an excluſive preference for the caprices of any one people, whoſe political ſituation, or whoſe moral character, may attach us to them as faultleſs models for our imitation. The ſame weakneſs and verſatility of mind; the ſame facility of

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aſſociation, which, in the caſe of a perſon who has never extended his views beyond his own community, is a ſource of national prejudice and of national bigotry, renders the mind, when forced into new ſituations, eaſily ſuſceptible of other prejudices no leſs capricious; and frequently prevents the time, which is devoted to travelling, or to ſtudy, from being ſubſervient to any better purpoſe, than an importation of foreign faſhions, or a ſtill more ludicrous imitation of antient follies.

THE philoſopher whoſe thoughts dwell habitually, not merely upon what is, or what has been, but upon what is beſt and moſt expedient for mankind; who, to the ſtudy of books, and the obſervation of manners, has added a careful examination of the principles of the human conſtitution, and of thoſe which ought to regulate the ſocial order; is the only perſon who is effectually ſecured againſt both the weakneſſes which I have deſcribed. By learning to ſeparate what is eſſential to morality and to happineſs, from thoſe adventitious trifles which it is the province of faſhion to direct, he is equally guarded againſt the follies of national prejudice, and a weak deviation, in matters of indifference, from eſtabliſhed ideas. Upon his mind, thus occupied with important ſubjects of reflexion, the fluctuating caprices and faſhions of the times loſe their influence; while accuſtomed to avoid the ſlavery of local and arbitrary habits, he poſſeſſes, in his own genuine ſimplicity of character, the ſame power of accommodation to external circumſtances, which men of the world derive from the pliability of their taſte, and the verſatility of their manners. As the order, too, of his ideas is accommodated, not to what is caſually preſented from without, but to his own ſyſtematical principles,

principles, his aſſociations are ſubject only to thoſe ſlow and pleaſing changes which ariſe from his growing light and improving reaſon: and, in ſuch a period of the world as the preſent, when the preſs not only excludes the poſſibility of a retrogradation in human affairs, but operates with an irreſiſtible though gradual progreſs, in undermining prejudices and in extending the triumphs of philoſophy, he may reaſonably indulge the hope, that ſociety will every day approach nearer and nearer to what he wiſhes it to be. A man of ſuch a character, inſtead of looking back on the paſt with regret, finds himſelf (if I may uſe the expreſſion) more at home in the world, and more ſatisfied with its order, the longer he lives in it. The melancholy contraſts which old men are ſometimes diſpoſed to ſtate, between its condition, when they are about to leave it, and that in which they found it at the commencement of their career, ariſes, in moſt caſes, from the unlimited influence which in their early years they had allowed to the faſhions of the times, in the formation of their characters. How different from thoſe ſentiments and proſpects, which dignified the retreat of Turgot, and brightened the declining years of Franklin!

THE querulous temper, however, which is incident to old men, although it renders their manners diſagreeable in the intercourſe of ſocial life, is by no means the moſt contemptible form in which the prejudices I have now been deſcribing, may diſplay their influence. Such a temper indicates at leaſt a certain degree of obſervation, in marking the viciſſitudes of human affairs, and a certain degree of ſenſibility in early life, which has connected pleaſing ideas with the ſcenes of infancy and

youth. A very great proportion of mankind are, in a great meaſure, incapable either of the one or of the other; and, ſuffering themſelves to be carried quietly along with the ſtream of faſhion, and finding their opinions and their feelings always in the ſame relative ſituation to the fleeting objects around them, are perfectly unconſcious of any progreſs in their own ideas, or of any change in the manners of their age. In vain the philoſopher reminds them of the opinions they yeſterday held; and forewarns them, from the ſpirit of the times, of thoſe which they are to hold to-morrow. The opinions of the preſent moment ſeem to them to be inſeparable from their conſtitution; and when the proſpects are realiſed, which they lately treated as chimerical, their minds are ſo gradually prepared for the event, that they behold it without any emotions of wonder or curioſity; and it is to the philoſopher alone, by whom it was predicted, that it appears to furniſh a ſubject worthy of future reflexion.

THE prejudices to which the laſt obſervations relate, have their origin in that diſpoſition of our nature, which accommodates the order of our ideas, and our various intellectual habits, to whatever appearances have been long and familiarly preſented to the mind. But there are other prejudices which, by being intimately aſſociated with the eſſential principles of our conſtitution, or with the original and univerſal laws of our belief, are incomparably more inveterate in their nature, and have a far more extenſive influence on human character and happineſs.

III. THE manner in which the aſſociation of ideas operates in producing this third claſs of our ſpeculative errors, may be conceived,

ceived, in part, from what was formerly ſaid, concerning the ſuperſtitious obſervances, which are mixed with the practice of medicine among rude nations. As all the different circumſtances which accompanied the firſt adminiſtration of a remedy, come to be conſidered as eſſential to its future ſucceſs, and are blended together in our conceptions, without any diſcrimination of their relative importance; ſo, whatever tenets and ceremonies we have been taught to connect with the religious creed of our infancy, become almoſt a part of our conſtitution, by being indiſſolubly united with truths which are eſſential to happineſs, and which we are led to reverence and to love, by all the beſt diſpoſitions of the heart. The aſtoniſhment which the peaſant feels, when he ſees the rites of a religion different from his own, is no leſs great, than if he ſaw ſome flagrant breach of the moral duties, or ſome direct act of impiety to God; nor is it eaſy for him to conceive, that there can be any thing worthy in a mind which treats with indifference, what awakens in his own breaſt all its beſt and ſublimeſt emotions. "Is it poſſible," (ſays the old and expiring Bramin, in one of Marmontel's tales, to the young Engliſh officer who had ſaved the life of his daughter,) "is it poſſible, that he to "whoſe compaſſion I owe the preſervation of my child, and "who now ſoothes my laſt moments with the conſolations of "piety, ſhould not believe in the god *Viſtnou*, and his nine "metamorphoſes!"

WHAT has now been ſaid on the nature of religious ſuperſtition, may be applied to many other ſubjects. In particular, it may be applied to thoſe political prejudices which

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bias the judgment even of enlightened men in all countries of the world.

How deeply rooted in the human frame are thoſe important principles, which intereſt the good man in the proſperity of the world; and more eſpecially in the proſperity of that beloved community to which he belongs! How ſmall, at the ſame time, is the number of individuals who, accuſtomed to contemplate one modification alone of the ſocial order, are able to diſtinguiſh the circumſtances which are eſſential to human happineſs, from thoſe which are indifferent or hurtful! In ſuch a ſituation, how natural is it for a man of benevolence, to acquire an indiſcriminate and ſuperſtitious veneration for all the inſtitutions under which he has been educated; as theſe inſtitutions, however capricious and abſurd in themſelves, are not only familiariſed by habit to all his thoughts and feelings, but are conſecrated in his mind by an indiſſoluble aſſociation with duties which nature recommends to his affections, and which reaſon commands him to fulfil. It is on theſe accounts that a ſuperſtitious zeal againſt innovation, both in religion and politics, where it is evidently grafted on piety to God, and good-will to mankind, however it may excite the ſorrow of the more enlightened philoſopher, is juſtly entitled, not only to his indulgence, but to his eſteem and affection.

THE remarks which have been already made, are ſufficient to ſhew, how neceſſary it is for us, in the formation of our philoſophical principles, to examine with care all thoſe opinions which, in our early years, we have imbibed from our inſtructors; or which

which are connected with our own local ſituation. Nor does the univerſality of an opinion among men who have received a ſimilar education, afford any preſumption in its favour; for, however great the deference is, which a wiſe man will always pay to common belief, upon thoſe ſubjects which have employed the unbiaſſed reaſon of mankind, he certainly owes it no reſpect, in ſo far as he ſuſpects it to be influenced by faſhion or authority. Nothing can be more juſt than the obſervation of Fontenelle, that "the number of thoſe who believe in a ſyſtem already "eſtabliſhed in the world, does not, in the leaſt, add to its "credibility; but that the number of thoſe who doubt of it, has "a tendency to diminiſh it."

THE ſame remarks lead, upon the other hand, to another concluſion of ſtill greater importance; that, notwithſtanding the various falſe opinions which are current in the world, there are ſome truths, which are inſeparable from the human underſtanding, and by means of which, the errors of education, in moſt inſtances, are enabled to take hold of our belief.

A WEAK mind, unaccuſtomed to reflexion, and which has paſſively derived its moſt important opinions from habit or from authority, when, in conſequence of a more enlarged intercourſe with the world, it finds, that ideas which it had been taught to regard as ſacred, are treated by enlightened and worthy men with ridicule, is apt to loſe its reverence for the fundamental and eternal truths on which theſe acceſſory ideas are grafted, and eaſily falls a prey to that ſceptical philoſophy which teaches, that all the opinions, and all the principles of action by which mankind

mankind are governed, may be traced to the influence of education and example. Amidſt the infinite variety of forms, however, which our verſatile nature aſſumes, it cannot fail to ſtrike an attentive obſerver, that there are certain indelible features common to them all. In one ſituation, we find good men attached to a republican form of government; in another, to a monarchy; but in all ſituations, we find them devoted to the ſervice of their country and of mankind, and diſpoſed to regard, with reverence and love, the moſt abſurd and capricious inſtitutions which cuſtom has led them to connect with the order of ſociety. The different appearances, therefore, which the political opinions and the political conduct of men exhibit, while they demonſtrate to what a wonderful degree human nature may be influenced by ſituation and by early inſtruction, evince the exiſtence of ſome common and original principles, which fit it for the political union, and illuſtrate the uniform operation of thoſe laws of aſſociation, to which, in all the ſtages of ſociety, it is equally ſubject.

SIMILAR obſervations are applicable, and, indeed, in a ſtill more ſtriking degree, to the opinions of mankind on the important queſtions of religion and morality. The variety of ſyſtems which they have formed to themſelves concerning theſe ſubjects, has often excited the ridicule of the ſceptic and the libertine; but if, on the one hand, this variety ſhews, the folly of bigotry, and the reaſonableſs of mutual indulgence; the curioſity which has led men in every ſituation to ſuch ſpeculations, and the influence which their concluſions, however abſurd, have had on their character and their happineſs, prove, no leſs clearly,

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on the other, that there muſt be ſome principles from which they all derive their origin; and invite the philoſopher to aſcertain what are theſe original and immutable laws of the human mind.

" EXAMINE" (ſays Mr. Hume) " the religious principles " which have prevailed in the world. You will ſcarcely be per- " ſuaded, that they are any thing but ſick men's dreams; or, " perhaps, will regard them more as the playſome whimſies of " monkeys in human ſhape, than the ſerious, poſitive, dogma- " tical aſſeverations of a being, who dignifies himſelf with the " name of rational."——" To oppoſe the torrent of ſcholaſtic " religion by ſuch feeble maxims as theſe, that it is impoſſible " for the ſame thing to be and not to be; that the whole is " greater than a part; that two and three make five; is pre- " tending to ſtop the ocean with a bulruſh." But what is the inference to which we are led by theſe obſervations? Is it, (to uſe the words of this ingenious writer,) " that the whole is a " riddle, an ænigma, an inexplicable myſtery; and that doubt, " uncertainty, and ſuſpenſe, appear the only reſult of our moſt " accurate ſcrutiny concerning this ſubject?" Or ſhould not rather the melancholy hiſtories which he has exhibited of the follies and caprices of ſuperſtition, direct our attention to thoſe ſacred and indelible characters on the human mind, which all theſe perver- ſions of reaſon are unable to obliterate; like that image of him- ſelf, which Phidias wiſhed to perpetuate, by ſtamping it ſo deeply on the buckler of his *Minerva*; " ut nemo delere poſſet " aut divellere, qui totam ſtatuam non imminueret *." In truth, the more ſtriking the contradictions, and the more ludicrous

* Select Diſcourſes, by JOHN SMITH, p. 119. Cambridge, 1673.

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the ceremonies to which the pride of human reaſon has thus been reconciled; the ſtronger is our evidence that religion has a foundation in the nature of man. When the greateſt of modern philoſophers declares, that "he would rather believe all "the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Al-"coran, than that this univerſal frame is without mind*;" he has expreſſed the ſame feeling, which, in all ages and nations, has led good men, unaccuſtomed to reaſoning, to an implicit faith in the creed of their infancy;—a feeling which affords an evidence of the exiſtence of the Deity, incomparably more ſtriking, than if, unmixed with error and undebaſed by ſuperſtition, this moſt important of all principles had commanded the univerſal aſſent of mankind. Where are the other truths, in the whole circle of the ſciences, which are ſo eſſential to human happineſs, as to procure an eaſy acceſs, not only for themſelves, but for whatever opinions may happen to be blended with them? Where are the truths ſo venerable and commanding, as to impart their own ſublimity to every trifling memorial which recals them to our remembrance; to beſtow ſolemnity and elevation on every mode of expreſſion by which they are conveyed; and which, in whatever ſcene they have habitually occupied the thoughts, conſecrate every object which it preſents to our ſenſes, and the very ground we have been accuſtomed to tread? To attempt to weaken the authority of ſuch impreſſions, by a detail of the endleſs variety of forms, which they derive from caſual aſſociations, is ſurely an employment unſuitable to the dignity of philoſophy. To

* Lord Bacon, in his Eſſays.

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the vulgar, it may be amuſing, in this, as in other inſtances, to indulge their wonder at what is new or uncommon; but to the philoſopher it belongs to perceive, under all theſe various diſguiſes, the workings of the ſame common nature; and in the ſuperſtitions of Egypt, no leſs than in the lofty viſions of Plato, to recognize the exiſtence of thoſe moral ties which unite the heart of man to the Author of his being.

SECTION II.

Influence of the Aſſociation of Ideas on our Judgments in Matters of Taſte.

THE very general obſervations which I am to make in this Section, do not preſuppoſe any particular theory concerning the nature of Taſte. It is ſufficient for my purpoſe to remark, that Taſte is not a ſimple and original faculty, but a power gradually formed by experience and obſervation. It implies, indeed, as its ground-work, a certain degree of natural ſenſibility; but it implies alſo the exerciſe of the judgment; and is the ſlow reſult of an attentive examination and compariſon of the agreeable or diſagreeable effects produced on the mind by external objects.

SUCH of my readers as are acquainted with "An Eſſay on the Nature and Principles of Taſte," lately publiſhed by Mr.

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Alifon, will not be ſurpriſed that I decline the diſcuſſion of a ſubject which he has treated with ſo much ingenuity and elegance.

THE view which was formerly given of the proceſs, by which the general laws of the material world are inveſtigated, and which I endeavoured to illuſtrate by the ſtate of medicine among rude nations, is ſtrictly applicable to the hiſtory of Taſte. That certain objects are fitted to give pleaſure, and others diſguſt, to the mind, we know from experience alone; and it is impoſſible for us, by any reaſoning *a priori*, to explain, *how* the pleaſure or the pain is produced. In the works of nature we find, in many inſtances, Beauty and Sublimity involved among circumſtances, which are either indifferent, or which obſtruct the general effect: and it is only by a train of experiments, that we can ſeparate thoſe circumſtances from the reſt, and aſcertain with what particular qualities the pleaſing effect is connected. Accordingly, the inexperienced artiſt, when he copies Nature, will copy her ſervilely, that he may be certain of ſecuring the pleaſing effect; and the beauties of his performances will be encumbered with a number of ſuperfluous or of diſagreeable concomitants. Experience and obſervation alone can enable him to make this diſcrimination: to exhibit the principles of beauty pure and unadulterated, and to form a creation of his own, more faultleſs than ever fell under the obſervation of his ſenſes.

THIS analogy between the progreſs of Taſte from rudeneſs to refinement; and the progreſs of phyſical knowledge from the ſuperſtitions

ſuperſtitions of a ſavage tribe, to the inveſtigation of the laws of nature, proceeds on the ſuppoſition, that, as in the material world there are general facts, beyond which philoſophy is unable to proceed; ſo, in the conſtitution of man, there is an inexplicable adaptation of the mind to the objects with which his faculties are converſant; in conſequence of which, theſe objects are fitted to produce agreeable or diſagreeable emotions. In both caſes, reaſoning may be employed with propriety to refer particular phenomena to general principles; but in both caſes, we muſt at laſt arrive at principles of which no account can be given, but that ſuch is the will of our Maker.

A GREAT part, too, of the remarks which were made in the laſt ſection on the origin of popular prejudices, may be applied to explain the influence of caſual aſſociations on Taſte; but theſe remarks do not ſo completely exhauſt the ſubject, as to ſuperſede the neceſſity of farther illuſtration. In matters of Taſte, the effects which we conſider, are produced on the Mind itſelf; and are accompanied either with pleaſure or with pain. Hence the tendency to caſual aſſociation, is much ſtronger than it commonly is, with reſpect to phyſical events; and when ſuch aſſociations are once formed, as they do not lead to any important inconvenience, ſimilar to thoſe which reſult from phyſical miſtakes, they are not ſo likely to be corrected by mere experience, unaſſiſted by ſtudy. To this it is owing, that the influence of aſſociation on our judgments concerning beauty and deformity, is ſtill more remarkable than on our ſpeculative concluſions; a circumſtance which has led ſome philoſophers to ſuppoſe, that aſſociation is ſufficient to account for the origin of

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theſe notions; and that there is no ſuch thing as a ſtandard of Taſte, founded on the principles of the human conſtitution. But this is undoubtedly puſhing the theory a great deal too far. The aſſociation of ideas can never account for the origin of a new notion; or of a pleaſure eſſentially different from all the others which we know. It may, indeed, enable us to conceive how a thing indifferent in itſelf, may become a ſource of pleaſure, by being connected in the mind with ſomething elſe which is naturally agreeable; but it preſuppoſes, in every inſtance, the exiſtence of thoſe notions and thoſe feelings which it is its province to combine: inſomuch that, I apprehend, it will be found, wherever aſſociation produces a change in our judgments on matters of Taſte, it does ſo, by co-operating with ſome natural principle of the mind, and implies the exiſtence of certain original ſources of pleaſure and uneaſineſs.

A MODE of dreſs, which at firſt appeared awkward, acquires, in a few weeks or months, the appearance of elegance. By being accuſtomed to ſee it worn by thoſe whom we conſider as models of Taſte, it becomes aſſociated with the agreeable impreſſions which we receive from the eaſe and grace and refinement of their manners. When it pleaſes us by itſelf, the effect is not to be aſcribed to the dreſs, but to the impreſſions with which it has been generally connected, and which it naturally recalls to the mind.

THIS obſervation points out to us the cauſe of the perpetual viciſſitudes in dreſs, and in every thing whoſe chief recommendation ariſes from faſhion. It is evident that, in ſo far as the

the agreeable effect of a dreſs ariſes from aſſociation, the effect will continue only while it is confined to the higher orders. When it is adopted by the multitude, it not only ceaſes to be aſſociated with ideas of taſte and refinement, but it is aſſociated with ideas of affectation, abſurd imitation, and vulgarity. It is accordingly laid aſide by the higher orders, who ſtudiouſly avoid every circumſtance in external appearance, which is debaſed by low and common uſe; and they are led to exerciſe their invention, in the introduction of ſome new peculiarities, which firſt become faſhionable, then common, and laſt of all, are abandoned as vulgar.

IT has been often remarked, that after a certain period in the progreſs of ſociety, the public Taſte becomes corrupted; and the different productions of the fine arts begin to degenerate from that ſimplicity, which they had attained in their ſtate of greateſt perfection. One reaſon of this decline is ſuggeſted by the foregoing obſervations.

FROM the account which has been given of the natural progreſs of Taſte, in ſeparating the genuine principles of beauty from ſuperfluous and from offenſive concomitants, it is evident, that there is a limit, beyond which the love of ſimplicity cannot be carried. No bounds, indeed, can be ſet to the creations of genius; but as this quality occurs ſeldom in an eminent degree, it commonly happens, that after a period of great refinement of Taſte, men begin to gratify their love of variety, by adding ſuperfluous circumſtances to the finiſhed models exhibited by their predeceſſors, or by making other trifling alterations.

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tions on them, with a view merely of diverſifying the effect. Theſe additions and alterations, indifferent, perhaps, or even in ſome degree offenſive in themſelves, acquire ſoon a borrowed beauty, from the connexion in which we ſee them, or from the influence of faſhion: the ſame cauſe which at firſt produced them, continues perpetually to increaſe their number; and Taſte returns to barbariſm, by almoſt the ſame ſteps which conducted it to perfection.

THE truth of theſe remarks will appear ſtill more ſtriking to thoſe who conſider the wonderful effect which a writer of ſplendid genius but of incorrect taſte, has in miſleading the public judgment. The peculiarities of ſuch an author are conſecrated by the connexion in which we ſee them, and even pleaſe, to a certain degree, when detached from the excellencies of his compoſition, by recalling to us the agreeable impreſſions with which they have been formerly aſſociated. How many imitations have we ſeen, of the affectations of Sterne, by men who were unable to copy his beauties! And yet theſe imitations of his defects; of his abrupt manner; of his minute ſpecification of circumſtances; and even of his daſhes, produce, at firſt, ſome effect on readers of ſenſibility, but of uncultivated taſte, in conſequence of the exquiſite ſtrokes of the pathetic, and the ſingular vein of humour, with which they are united in the original.

FROM what has been ſaid, it is obvious, that the circumſtances which pleaſe, in the objects of taſte, are of two kinds: Firſt, thoſe which are fitted to pleaſe by nature, or by aſſociations which all mankind are led to form by their common condition; and

and Secondly, thoſe which pleaſe in conſequence of aſſociations ariſing from local and accidental circumſtances. Hence, there are two kinds of Taſte: the one enabling us to judge of thoſe beauties which have a foundation in the human conſtitution; the other, of ſuch objects as derive their principal recommendation from the influence of faſhion.

THESE two kinds of Taſte are not always united in the ſame perſon: indeed, I am inclined to think, that they are united but rarely. The perfection of the one, depends much upon the degree in which we are able to free the mind from the influence of caſual aſſociations; that of the other, on the contrary, depends on a facility of aſſociation which enables us to fall in, at once, with all the turns of the faſhion, and, (as Shakeſpeare expreſſes it,) "to catch the tune of the times."

I SHALL endeavour to illuſtrate ſome of the foregoing remarks, by applying them to the ſubject of language, which affords numberleſs inſtances to exemplify the influence which the aſſociation of ideas has on our judgments in matters of Taſte.

IN the ſame manner in which an article of dreſs acquires an appearance of elegance or of vulgarity from the perſons by whom it is habitually worn; ſo a particular mode of pronunciation acquires an air of faſhion or of ruſticity, from the perſons by whom it is habitually employed. The Scotch accent is ſurely in itſelf as good as the Engliſh; and with a few exceptions, is as agreeable to the ear: and yet how offenſive does

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does it appear, even to us, who have been accuſtomed to hear it from our infancy, when compared with that which is uſed by our ſouthern neighbours!—No reaſon can be given for this, but that the capital of Scotland is now become a provincial town, and London is the ſeat of our court.

THE diſtinction which is to be found, in the languages of all civiliſed nations, between low and polite modes of expreſſion, ariſes from ſimilar cauſes. It is, indeed, amuſing to remark, the ſolicitude with which the higher orders, in the monarchies of modern Europe, avoid every circumſtance in their exterior appearance and manner, which, by the moſt remote aſſociation, may, in the minds of others, connect them with the idea of the multitude. Their whole dreſs and deportment and converſation are ſtudiouſly arranged to convey an impoſing notion of their conſequence; and to recal to the ſpectator, by numberleſs ſlight and apparently unintentional hints, the agreeable impreſſions which are aſſociated with the advantages of fortune.

To this influence of aſſociation on language, it is neceſſary for every writer to attend carefully, who wiſhes to expreſs himſelf with elegance. For the attainment of correctneſs and purity in the uſe of words, the rules of grammarians and of critics may be a ſufficient guide; but it is not in the works of this claſs of authors, that the higher beauties of ſtyle are to be ſtudied. As the air and manner of a gentleman can be acquired only by living habitually in the beſt ſociety, ſo grace in compoſition muſt be attained by an habitual acquaintance with claſſical

claſſical writers. It is indeed neceſſary for our information, that we ſhould peruſe, occaſionally, many books which have no merit in point of expreſſion; but I believe it to be extremely uſeful to all literary men, to counteract the effect of this miſcellaneous reading, by maintaining a conſtant and familiar acquaintance with a few of the moſt faultleſs models which the language affords. For want of ſome ſtandard of this ſort, we frequently ſee an author's taſte in writing alter much to the worſe in the courſe of his life; and his later productions fall below the level of his early eſſays. D'Alembert tells us, that Voltaire had always lying on his table, the Petit Carême of Maſſillon, and the tragedies of Racine; the former to fix his taſte in proſe compoſition, and the latter in poetry.

In avoiding, however, expreſſions which are debaſed by vulgar uſe, there is a danger of running into the other extreme, in queſt of faſhionable words and phraſes. Such an affectation may, for a few years, gratify the vanity of an author, by giving him the air of a man of the world; but the reputation it beſtows, is of a very tranſitory nature. The works which continue to pleaſe from age to age, are written with perfect ſimplicity; while thoſe which captivate the multitude, by a diſplay of meretricious ornaments, if, by chance, they ſhould ſurvive the faſhions to which they are accommodated, remain only to furniſh a ſubject of ridicule to poſterity. The portrait of a beautiful woman, in the faſhionable dreſs of the day, may pleaſe at the moment it is painted; nay, may perhaps pleaſe more than in any that the fancy of the artiſt could have ſuggeſted; but it is only in the plaineſt and ſimpleſt drapery, that the

moſt perfect form can be tranſmitted with advantage to future times.

THE exceptions which the hiſtory of literature ſeems to furniſh to theſe obſervations, are only apparent. That, in the works of our beſt authors, there are many beauties which have long and generally been admired, and which yet owe their whole effect to aſſociation, cannot be diſputed; but in ſuch caſes, it will always be found, that the aſſociations which are the foundation of our pleaſure, have, in conſequence of ſome peculiar combination of circumſtances, been more widely diffuſed, and more permanently eſtabliſhed among mankind, than thoſe which date their origin from the caprices of our own age are ever likely to be. An admiration for the claſſical remains of antiquity is, at preſent, not leſs general in Europe, than the advantages of a liberal education; and ſuch is the effect of this admiration, that there are certain caprices of Taſte, from which no man who is well educated is entirely free. A compoſition in a modern language, which ſhould ſometimes depart from the ordinary modes of expreſſion, from an affectation of the idioms which are conſecrated in the claſſics, would pleaſe a very wide circle of readers, in conſequence of the prevalence of claſſical aſſociations; and, therefore, ſuch affectations, however abſurd when carried to a degree of ſingularity, are of a far ſuperior claſs to thoſe which are adapted to the faſhions of the day. But ſtill the general principle holds true, That whatever beauties derive their origin merely from caſual aſſociation, muſt appear capricious to thoſe to whom the aſſociation does not extend; and that the ſimpleſt ſtyle is that which continues longeſt to pleaſe, and which pleaſes

pleaſes moſt univerſally. In the writings of Mr. Harris, there is a certain claſſical air, which will always have many admirers, while antient learning continues to be cultivated; but which, to a mere Engliſh reader, appears ſomewhat unnatural and ungraceful, when compared with the compoſition of Swift or of Addiſon.

THE analogy of the arts of ſtatuary and painting, may be of uſe in illuſtrating theſe remarks. The influence of antient times has extended to theſe, as well as to the art of writing; and in this caſe, no leſs than in the other, the tranſcendent power of genius has eſtabliſhed a propriety of choice in matters of indifference, and has, perhaps, conſecrated, in the opinion of mankind, ſome of its own caprices.

" MANY of the ornaments of art," (ſays Sir Joſhua Reynolds,) " thoſe at leaſt for which no reaſon can be given, are " tranſmitted to us, are adopted, and acquire their conſequence, " from the company in which we have been uſed to ſee them. " As Greece and Rome are the fountains from whence have " flowed all kinds of excellence, to that veneration which they " have a right to claim for the pleaſure and knowledge which " they have afforded us, we voluntarily add our approbation " of every ornament and every cuſtom that belonged to them, " even to the faſhion of their dreſs. For it may be obſerved, " that, not ſatisfied with them in their own place, we make no " difficulty of dreſſing ſtatues of modern heroes or ſenators, in " the faſhion of the Roman armour, or peaceful robe; and " even go ſo far as hardly to bear a ſtatue in any other " drapery.

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"THE figures of the great men of thoſe nations have come "down to us in ſculpture. In ſculpture remain almoſt all the "excellent ſpecimens of antient art. We have ſo far aſſociated "perſonal dignity to the perſons thus repreſented, and the truth "of art to their manner of repreſentation, that it is not in our "power any longer to ſeparate them. This is not ſo in paint- "ing; becauſe, having no excellent antient portraits, that con- "nexion was never formed. Indeed, we could no more ven- "ture to paint a general officer in a Roman military habit, than "we could make a ſtatue in the preſent uniform. But ſince "we have no antient portraits, to ſhew how ready we are to "adopt thoſe kind of prejudices, we make the beſt authority "among the moderns ſerve the ſame purpoſe. The great va- "riety of excellent portraits with which Vandyke has enriched "this nation, we are not content to admire for their real excel- "lence, but extend our approbation even to the dreſs which "happened to be the faſhion of that age. By this means, it "muſt be acknowledged, very ordinary pictures acquired ſome- "thing of the air and effect of the works of Vandyke, and "appeared therefore, at firſt ſight, better pictures than they "really were. They appeared ſo, however, to thoſe only who "had the means of making this aſſociation *."

THE influence of aſſociation on our notions concerning language, is ſtill more ſtrongly exemplified in poetry than in proſe. As it is one great object of the poet, in his ſerious productions, to elevate the imagination of his readers above the groſſneſs of ſenſible objects, and the vulgarity of common life, it becomes

* REYNOLDS's Diſcourſes, p. 313, et ſeq.

peculiarly

peculiarly neceſſary for him to reject the uſe of all words and phraſes which are trivial and hackneyed. Among thoſe which are equally pure and equally perſpicuous, he, in general, finds it expedient to adopt that which is the leaſt common. Milton prefers the words Rhene and Danaw, to the more common words Rhine and Danube.

> "A multitude, like which the populous North
> "Pour'd never from his frozen loins, to paſs
> "Rhene or the Danaw *."

In the following line,

> "Things unattempted yet in proſe or rhyme,"

how much more ſuitable to the poetical ſtyle does the expreſſion appear, than if the author had ſaid,

> "Things unattempted yet in proſe or verſe."

In another paſſage, where, for the ſake of variety, he has made uſe of the laſt phraſe, he adds an epithet, to remove it a little from the familiarity of ordinary diſcourſe.

> ——— "in proſe or numerous verſe †."

In conſequence of this circumſtance, there ariſes gradually in every language a poetical diction, which differs widely from the common diction of proſe. It is much leſs ſubject to the viciſſitudes of faſhion, than the polite modes of expreſſion in familiar converſation; becauſe, when it has once been adopted

* Paradiſe Loſt, book i. l. 351.

† Ibid. book i. l. 150. See NEWTON's Edit.

by