An Essay On The History Of Civil Society

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Part First. Of the General Characteristics of Human Nature.

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AN ESSAY ON THE HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

PART FIRST.

Of the General Characteriſtics of Human Nature.

SECTION I.

Of the queſtion relating to the State of Nature.

NATURAL productions are generally formed by degrees. Vegetables grow from a tender ſhoot, and animals from an infant ſtate. The latter being deſtined to act, extend their operations as their powers increaſe: they exhibit a progreſs in what they perform, as well as in the faculties they acquire. This progreſs in the caſe of man is continued

to a greater extent than in that of any other animal. Not only the individual advances from infancy to manhood, but the ſpecies itſelf from rudeneſs to civilization. Hence the ſuppoſed departure of mankind from the ſtate of their nature; hence our conjectures and different opinions of what man muſt have been in the firſt age of his being. The poet, the hiſtorian, and the moraliſt, frequently allude to this ancient time; and under the emblems of gold, or of iron, repreſent a condition, and a manner of life, from which mankind have either degenerated, or on which they have greatly improved. On either ſuppoſition, the firſt ſtate of our nature muſt have borne no reſemblance to what men have exhibited in any ſubſequent period; hiſtorical monuments, even of the earlieſt date, are to be conſidered as novelties; and the moſt common eſtabliſhments of human ſociety are to be claſſed among the incroachments which fraud, oppreſſion, or a buſy invention, have made upon the reign of nature, by which the chief of our grievances or bleſſings were equally with-held.

AMONG the writers who have attempted to diſtinguiſh, in the human character, its original qualities, and to point out the limits between nature and art, ſome have repreſented mankind in their firſt condition, as poſſeſſed of mere animal ſenſibility, without any exerciſe of the faculties that render them ſuperior to the brutes, without any political union, without any means of explaining their ſentiments, and even without poſſeſſing any of the apprehenſions and paſſions which the voice

voice and the geſture are ſo well fitted to expreſs. Others have made the ſtate of nature to conſiſt in perpetual wars, kindled by competition for dominion and intereſt, where every individual had a ſeparate quarrel with his kind, and where the preſence of a fellow-creature was the ſignal of battle.

The deſire of laying the foundation of a favourite ſyſtem, or a fond expectation, perhaps, that we may be able to penetrate the ſecrets of nature, to the very ſource of exiſtence, have, on this ſubject, led to many fruitleſs inquiries, and given riſe to many wild ſuppoſitions. Among the various qualities which mankind poſſeſs, we ſelect one or a few particulars on which to eſtabliſh a theory, and in framing our account of what man was in ſome imaginary ſtate of nature, we overlook what he has always appeared within the reach of our own obſervation, and in the records of hiſtory.

In every other inſtance, however, the natural hiſtorian thinks himſelf obliged to collect facts, not to offer conjectures. When he treats of any particular ſpecies of animals, he ſuppoſes, that their preſent diſpoſitions and inſtincts are the ſame they originally had, and that their preſent manner of life is a continuance of their firſt deſtination. He admits, that his knowledge of the material ſyſtem of the world conſiſts in a collection of facts, or at moſt, in general tenets derived from particular obſervations and experiments. It is only in what relates to himſelf, and in matters the moſt important,

and the moſt eaſily known, that he ſubſtitutes hypotheſis inſtead of reality, and confounds the provinces of imagination and reaſon, of poetry and ſcience.

But without entering any farther on queſtions either in moral or phyſical ſubjects, relating to the manner or to the origin of our knowledge; without any diſparagement to that ſubtilty which would analyze every ſentiment, and trace every mode of being to its ſource; it may be ſafely affirmed, That the character of man, as he now exiſts, that the laws of this animal and intellectual ſyſtem, on which his happineſs now depends, deſerve our principal ſtudy; and that general principles relating to this, or any other ſubject, are uſeful only ſo far as they are founded on juſt obſervation, and lead to the knowledge of important conſequences, or ſo far as they enable us to act with ſucceſs when we would apply either the intellectual or the phyſical powers of nature, to the great purpoſes of human life.

If both the earlieſt and the lateſt accounts collected from every quarter of the earth, repreſent mankind as aſſembled in troops and companies; and the individual always joined by affection to one party, while he is poſſibly oppoſed to another; employed in the exerciſe of recollection and foreſight; inclined to communicate his own ſentiments, and to be made acquainted with thoſe of others; theſe facts muſt be admitted as the foundation of all our reaſoning relative to man. His mixed diſpoſition to friendſhip or enmity, his reaſon, his uſe of language

guage and articulate ſounds, like the ſhape and the erect poſition of his body, are to be conſidered as ſo many attributes of his nature: they are to be retained in his deſcription, as the wing and the paw are in that of the eagle and the lion, and as different degrees of fierceneſs, vigilance, timidity, or ſpeed, are made to occupy a place in the natural hiſtory of different animals.

If the queſtion be put, What the mind of man could perform, when left to itſelf, and without the aid of any foreign direction? we are to look for our anſwer in the hiſtory of mankind. Particular experiments which have been found ſo uſeful in eſtabliſhing the principles of other ſciences, could probably, on this ſubject, teach us nothing important, or new: we are to take the hiſtory of every active being from his conduct in the ſituation to which he is formed, not from his appearance in any forced or uncommon condition; a wild man therefore, caught in the woods, where he had always lived apart from his ſpecies, is a ſingular inſtance, not a ſpecimen of any general character. As the anatomy of an eye which had never received the impreſſions of light, or that of an ear which had never felt the impulſe of ſounds, would probably exhibit defects in the very ſtructure of the organs themſelves, ariſing from their not being applied to their proper functions; ſo any particular caſe of this ſort would only ſhew in what degree the powers of apprehenſion and ſentiment could exiſt where they had not been employed, and what would be the defects and imbecilities of a heart in which the emotions that pertain to ſociety had never been felt.

Mankind

MANKIND are to be taken in groupes, as they have always ſubſiſted. The hiſtory of the individual is but a detail of the ſentiments and thoughts he has entertained in the view of his ſpecies: and every experiment relative to this ſubject ſhould be made with entire ſocieties, not with ſingle men. We have every reaſon, however, to believe, that in the caſe of ſuch an experiment made, we ſhall ſuppoſe, with a colony of children tranſplanted from the nurſery, and left to form a ſociety apart, untaught, and undiſciplined, we ſhould only have the ſame things repeated, which, in ſo many different parts of the earth, have been tranſacted already. The members of our little ſociety would feed and ſleep, would herd together and play, would have a language of their own, would quarrel and divide, would be to one another the moſt important objects of the ſcene, and, in the ardour of their friendſhips and competitions, would overlook their perſonal danger, and ſuſpend the care of their ſelf-preſervation. Has not the human race been planted like the colony in queſtion? Who has directed their courſe? whoſe inſtruction have they heard? or whoſe example have they followed?

NATURE, therefore, we ſhall preſume, having given to every animal its mode of exiſtence, its diſpoſitions and manner of life, has dealt equally with thoſe of the human race; and the natural hiſtorian who would collect the properties of this ſpecies, may fill up every article now, as well as he could have done in any former age. Yet one property by which man is diſtinguiſhed, has

has been ſometimes overlooked in the account of his nature, or has only ſerved to miſlead our attention. In other claſſes of animals, the individual advances from infancy to age or maturity; and he attains, in the compaſs of a ſingle life, to all the perfection his nature can reach: but, in the human kind, the ſpecies has a progreſs as well as the individual; they build in every ſubſequent age on foundations formerly laid; and, in a ſucceſſion of years, tend to a perfection in the application of their faculties, to which the aid of long experience is required, and to which many generations muſt have combined their endeavours. We obſerve the progreſs they have made; we diſtinctly enumerate many of its ſteps; we can trace them back to a diſtant antiquity; of which no record remains, nor any monument is preſerved, to inform us what were the openings of this wonderful ſcene. The conſequence is, that inſtead of attending to the character of our ſpecies, where the particulars are vouched by the ſureſt authority, we endeavour to trace it through ages and ſcenes unknown; and, inſtead of ſuppoſing that the beginning of our ſtory was nearly of a piece with the ſequel, we think ourſelves warranted to reject every circumſtance of our preſent condition and frame, as adventitious, and foreign to our nature. The progreſs of mankind from a ſuppoſed ſtate of animal ſenſibility, to the attainment of reaſon, to the uſe of language, and to the habit of ſociety, has been accordingly painted with a force of imagination, and its ſteps have been marked with a boldneſs of invention, that would tempt us to admit,

among

among the materials of hiſtory, the ſuggeſtions of fancy, and to receive, perhaps, as the model of our nature in its original ſtate, ſome of the animals whoſe ſhape has the greateſt reſemblance to ours *.

It would be ridiculous to affirm, as a diſcovery, that the ſpecies of the horſe was probably never the ſame with that of the lion; yet, in oppoſition to what has dropped from the pens of eminent writers, we are obliged to obſerve, that men have always appeared among animals a diſtinct and a ſuperior race; that neither the poſſeſſion of ſimilar organs, nor the approximation of ſhape, nor the uſe of the hand †, nor the continued intercourſe with this ſovereign artiſt, has enabled any other ſpecies to blend their nature or their inventions with his; that in his rudeſt ſtate, he is found to be above them; and in his greateſt degeneracy, never deſcends to their level. He is, in ſhort, a man in every condition; and we can learn nothing of his nature from the analogy of other animals. If we would know him, we muſt attend to himſelf, to the courſe of his life, and the tenor of his conduct. With him the ſociety appears to be as old as the individual, and the uſe of the tongue as univerſal as that of the hand or the foot. If there was a time in which he had his acquaintance with his own ſpecies to make, and his faculties to acquire, it is a time of which we have no

* *Rouſſeau* ſur l'origine de l'inegalité parmi les hommes.

† Traité de l'eſprit.

record,

record, and in relation to which our opinions can ſerve no purpoſe, and are ſupported by no evidence.

We are often tempted into theſe boundleſs regions of ignorance or conjecture, by a fancy which delights in creating rather than in merely retaining the forms which are preſented before it: we are the dupes of a ſubtilty, which promiſes to ſupply every defect of our knowledge, and, by filling up a few blanks in the ſtory of nature, pretends to conduct our apprehenſion nearer to the ſource of exiſtence. On the credit of a few obſervations, we are apt to preſume, that the ſecret may ſoon be laid open, and that what is termed *wiſdom* in nature, may be referred to the operation of phyſical powers. We forget that phyſical powers, employed in ſucceſſion, and combined to a ſalutary purpoſe, conſtitute thoſe very proofs of deſign from which we infer the exiſtence of God; and that this truth being once admitted, we are no longer to ſearch for the ſource of exiſtence; we can only collect the laws which the author of nature has eſtabliſhed; and in our lateſt as well as our earlieſt diſcoveries, only come to perceive a mode of creation or providence before unknown.

We ſpeak of art as diſtinguiſhed from nature; but art itſelf is natural to man. He is in ſome meaſure the artificer of his own frame, as well as his fortune, and is deſtined, from the firſt age of his being, to invent and contrive. He applies the ſame talents to a variety of purpoſes, and acts nearly the ſame part in very

different ſcenes. He would be always improving on his ſubject, and he carries this intention where-ever he moves, through the ſtreets of the populous city, or the wilds of the foreſt. While he appears equally fitted to every condition, he is upon this account unable to ſettle in any. At once obſtinate and fickle, he complains of innovations, and is never ſated with novelty. He is perpetually buſied in reformations, and is continually wedded to his errors. If he dwell in a cave, he would improve it into a cottage; if he has already built, he would ſtill build to a greater extent. But he does not propoſe to make rapid and haſty tranſitions; his ſteps are progreſſive and ſlow; and his force, like the power of a ſpring, ſilently preſſes on every reſiſtance; an effect is ſometimes produced before the cauſe is perceived; and with all his talent for projects, his work is often accompliſhed before the plan is deviſed. It appears, perhaps, equally difficult to retard or to quicken his pace; if the projector complain he is tardy, the moraliſt thinks him unſtable; and whether his motions be rapid or ſlow, the ſcenes of human affairs perpetually change in his management: his emblem is a paſſing ſtream, not a ſtagnating pool. We may deſire to direct his love of improvement to its proper object, we may wiſh for ſtability of conduct; but we miſtake human nature, if we wiſh for a termination of labour, or a ſcene of repoſe.

THE occupations of men, in every condition, beſpeak their freedom of choice, their various opinions, and the multiplicity of wants by which they are urged: but they enjoy,

enjoy, or endure, with a ſenſibility, or a phlegm, which are nearly the ſame in every ſituation. They poſſeſs the ſhores of the Caſpian, or the Atlantic, by a different tenure, but with equal eaſe. On the one they are fixed to the ſoil, and ſeem to be formed for ſettlement, and the accommodation of cities: The names they beſtow on a nation, and on its territory, are the ſame. On the other they are mere animals of paſſage, prepared to roam on the face of the earth, and with their herds, in ſearch of new paſture and favourable ſeaſons, to follow the ſun in his annual courſe.

MAN finds his lodgment alike in the cave, the cottage, and the palace; and his ſubſiſtence equally in the woods, in the dairy, or the farm. He aſſumes the diſtinction of titles, equipage, and dreſs; he deviſes regular ſyſtems of government, and a complicated body of laws: or, naked in the woods, has no badge of ſuperiority but the ſtrength of his limbs and the ſagacity of his mind; no rule of conduct but choice; no tie with his fellow-creatures but affection, the love of company, and the deſire of ſafety. Capable of a great variety of arts, yet dependent on none in particular for the preſervation of his being; to whatever length he has carried his artifice, there he ſeems to enjoy the conveniencies that ſuit his nature, and to have found the condition to which he is deſtined. The tree which an American, on the banks of the Oroonoko *, has choſen to climb for the retreat, and the lodgement of his family, is to him a convenient dwelling. The

* Lafitau mœurs des ſauvages.

ſopha, the vaulted dome, and the colonade, do not more effectually content their native inhabitant.

If we are aſked therefore, Where the ſtate of nature is to be found? we may anſwer, It is here; and it matters not whether we are underſtood to ſpeak in the iſland of Great Britain, at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan. While this active being is in the train of employing his talents, and of operating on the ſubjects around him, all ſituations are equally natural. If we are told, That vice, at leaſt, is contrary to nature; we may anſwer, It is worſe; it is folly and wretchedneſs. But if nature is only oppoſed to art, in what ſituation of the human race are the footſteps of art unknown? In the condition of the ſavage, as well as in that of the citizen, are many proofs of human invention; and in either is not any permanent ſtation, but a mere ſtage through which this travelling being is deſtined to paſs. If the palace be unnatural, the cottage is ſo no leſs; and the higheſt refinements of political and moral apprehenſion, are not more artificial in their kind, than the firſt operations of ſentiment and reaſon.

If we admit that man is ſuſceptible of improvement, and has in himſelf a principle of progreſſion, and a deſire of perfection, it appears improper to ſay, that he has quitted the ſtate of his nature, when he has begun to proceed; or that he finds a ſtation for which he was not intended, while, like other animals, he only follows the diſpoſition,

disposition, and employs the powers that nature has given.

The latest efforts of human invention are but a continuation of certain devices which were practised in the earliest ages of the world, and in the rudest state of mankind. What the savage projects, or observes, in the forest, are the steps which led nations, more advanced, from the architecture of the cottage to that of the palace, and conducted the human mind from the perceptions of sense, to the general conclusions of science.

Acknowledged defects are to man in every condition matter of dislike. Ignorance and imbecility are objects of contempt: penetration and conduct give eminence, and procure esteem. Whither should his feelings and apprehensions on these subjects lead him? To a progress, no doubt, in which the savage, as well as the philosopher, is engaged; in which they have made different advances, but in which their ends are the same. The admiration Cicero entertained for literature, eloquence, and civil accomplishments, was not more real than that of a Scythian for such a measure of similar endowments as his own apprehension could reach. "Were I to "boast," says a Tartar prince *, "it would be of that "wisdom I have received from God. For as, on the one "hand, I yield to none in the conduct of war, in the "disposition of armies, whether of horse or of foot, and

* Abulgaze Bahadur Chan.; History of the Tartars.

"in

" in directing the movements of great or ſmall bodies ;
" ſo, on the other, I have my talent in writing, in-
" ferior perhaps only to thoſe who inhabit the great ci-
" ties of Perſia or India. Of other nations, unknown to
" me, I do not ſpeak."

MAN may miſtake the objects of his purſuit ; he may miſapply his induſtry, and miſplace his improvements. If under a ſenſe of ſuch poſſible errors, he would find a ſtandard by which to judge of his own proceedings, and arrive at the beſt ſtate of his nature, he cannot find it perhaps in the practice of any individual, or of any nation whatever ; not even in the ſenſe of the majority, or the prevailing opinion of his kind. He muſt look for it in the beſt conceptions of his underſtanding, in the beſt movements of his heart ; he muſt thence diſcover what is the perfection and the happineſs of which he is capable. He will find, on the ſcrutiny, that the proper ſtate of his nature, taken in this ſenſe, is not a condition from which mankind are for ever removed, but one to which they may now attain ; not prior to the exerciſe of their faculties, but procured by their juſt application.

OF all the terms that we employ in treating of human affairs, thoſe of *natural* and *unnatural* are the leaſt determinate in their meaning. Oppoſed to affectation, frowardneſs, or any other defect of the temper or character, the natural is an epithet of praiſe ; but employed to ſpecify a conduct which proceeds from the nature of man, can ſerve to diſtinguiſh nothing: for all the actions

tions of men are equally the reſult of their nature. At moſt, this language can only refer to the general and prevailing ſenſe or practice of mankind; and the purpoſe of every important inquiry on this ſubject may be ſerved by the uſe of a language equally familiar and more preciſe. What is juſt, or unjuſt? What is happy, or wretched, in the manners of men? What, in their various ſituations, is favourable or adverſe to their amiable qualities? are queſtions to which we may expect a ſatisfactory anſwer; and whatever may have been the original ſtate of our ſpecies, it is of more importance to know the condition to which we ourſelves ſhould aſpire, than that which our anceſtors may be ſuppoſed to have left.

SECT. II.

Of the principles of Self-preſervation.

IF in human nature there are qualities by which it is diſtinguiſhed from every other part of the animal creation, men are themſelves in different climates and in different ages greatly diverſified. So far as we are able to account for this diverſity on principles either moral or phyſical, we perform a taſk of great curioſity or ſignal utility. It appears neceſſary, however, that we attend to the univerſal qualities of our nature, before we regard its varieties, or attempt to explain differences conſiſting

ſiſting in the unequal poſſeſſion or application of diſpoſitions and powers that are in ſome meaſure common to all mankind.

MAN, like the other animals, has certain inſtinctive propenſities, which, prior to the perception of pleaſure or pain, and prior to the experience of what is pernicious or uſeful, lead him to perform many functions of nature relative to himſelf and to his fellow-creatures. He has one ſet of diſpoſitions which refer to his animal preſervation, and to the continuance of his race; another which lead to ſociety, and by inliſting him on the ſide of one tribe or community, frequently engage him in war and contention with the reſt of mankind. His powers of diſcernment, or his intellectual faculties, which, under the appellation of *reaſon*, are diſtinguiſhed from the analogous endowments of other animals, refer to the objects around him, either as they are ſubjects of mere knowledge, or as they are ſubjects of approbation or cenſure. He is formed not only to know, but likewiſe to admire and to contemn; and theſe proceedings of his mind have a principal reference to his own character, and to that of his fellow-creatures, as being the ſubjects on which he is chiefly concerned to diſtinguiſh what is right from what is wrong. He enjoys his felicity likewiſe on certain fixed and determinate conditions; and either as an individual apart, or as a member of civil ſociety, muſt take a particular courſe in order to reap the advantages of his nature. He is, withal, in a very high degree ſuſceptible of habits; and can, by forbearance or exerciſe,

cise, so far weaken, confirm, or even diversify his talents, and his dispositions, as to appear, in a great measure, the arbiter of his own rank in nature, and the author of all the varieties which are exhibited in the actual history of his species. The universal characteristics, in the mean time, to which we have now referred, must, when we would treat of any part of this history, constitute the first subject of our attention; and they require not only to be enumerated, but to be distinctly considered.

THE dispositions which refer to the preservation of the individual, while they continue to operate in the manner of instinctive desires, are nearly the same in man that they are in the other animals: but in him they are sooner or later combined with reflection and foresight; they give rise to his apprehensions on the subject of property, and make him acquainted with that object of care which he calls his interest. Without the instincts which teach the beaver and the squirrel, the ant and the bee, to make up their little hoards for winter, at first improvident, and, where no immediate object of passion is near, addicted to sloth, he becomes, in process of time, the great storemaster among animals. He finds in a provision of wealth, which he is probably never to employ, an object of his greatest solicitude, and the principal idol of his mind. He apprehends a relation between his person and his property, which renders what he calls his own in a manner a part of himself, a constituent of his rank, his condition, and his character, in

which, independent of any real enjoyment, he may be fortunate or unhappy; and, independent of any perſonal merit, he may be an object of conſideration or neglect; and in which he may be wounded and injured, while his perſon is ſafe, and every want of his nature completely ſupplied.

In theſe apprehenſions, while other paſſions only operate occaſionally, the intereſted find the object of their ordinary cares; their motive to the practice of mechanic and commercial arts; their temptation to treſpaſs on the laws of juſtice; and, when extremely corrupted, the price of their proſtitutions, and the ſtandard of their opinions on the ſubject of good and of evil. Under this influence, they would enter, if not reſtrained by the laws of civil ſociety, on a ſcene of violence or meanneſs, which would exhibit our ſpecies, by turns, under an aſpect more terrible and odious, or more vile and contemptible, than that of any animal which inherits the earth.

Although the conſideration of intereſt is founded on the experience of animal wants and deſires, its object is not to gratify any particular appetite, but to ſecure the means of gratifying all; and it impoſes frequently a reſtraint on the very deſires from which it aroſe, more powerful and more ſevere than thoſe of religion or duty. It ariſes from the principles of ſelf-preſervation in the human frame; but is a corruption, or at leaſt a partial reſult, of thoſe principles, and is upon many accounts very improperly termed *ſelf-love*.

Love

Love is an affection which carries the attention of the mind beyond itself, and has a quality, which we call *tenderness*, that never can accompany the considerations of interest. This affection being a complacency and a continued satisfaction in its object, independent of any external event, it has, in the midst of disappointment and sorrow, pleasures and triumphs unknown to those who act without any regard to their fellow-creatures; and in every change of condition, it continues entirely distinct from the sentiments which we feel on the subject of personal success or adversity. But as the care a man entertains for his own interest, and the attention his affection makes him pay to that of another, may have similar effects, the one on his own fortune, the other on that of his friend, we confound the principles from which he acts; we suppose that they are the same in kind, only referred to different objects; and we not only misapply the name of love, in conjunction with self, but, in a manner tending to degrade our nature, we limit the aim of this supposed selfish affection to the securing or accumulating the constituents of interest, or the means of mere animal life.

It is somewhat remarkable, that notwithstanding men value themselves so much on qualities of the mind, on parts, learning and wit, on courage, generosity, and honour, those men are still supposed to be in the highest degree selfish or attentive to themselves, who are most careful of animal life, and who are least mindful of rendering that life an object worthy of care. It will be dif-

ficult, however, to tell why a good underſtanding, a reſolute and generous mind, ſhould not, by every man in his ſenſes, be reckoned as much parts of himſelf, as either his ſtomach or his palate, and much more than his eſtate or his dreſs. The epicure, who conſults his phyſician, how he may reſtore his reliſh for food, and by creating an appetite, may increaſe the means of enjoyment, might at leaſt with an equal regard to himſelf, conſult how he might ſtrengthen his affection to a parent or a child, to his country or to mankind; and it is probable that an appetite of this ſort would prove a ſource of enjoyment not leſs than the former.

By our ſuppoſed ſelfiſh maxims, notwithſtanding, we generally exclude from among the objects of our perſonal cares, many of the happier and more reſpectable qualities of human nature. We conſider affection and courage as mere follies, that lead us to neglect or expoſe ourſelves; we make wiſdom conſiſt in a regard to our intereſt; and without explaining what intereſt means, we would have it underſtood as the only reaſonable motive of action with mankind. There is even a ſyſtem of philoſophy founded upon tenets of this ſort, and ſuch is our opinion of what men are likely to do upon ſelfiſh principles, that we think it muſt have a tendency very dangerous to virtue. But the errors of this ſyſtem do not conſiſt ſo much in general principles, as in their particular applications; not ſo much in teaching men to regard themſelves, as in leading them to forget that their happieſt affections, their candour, and their independence

dence of mind, are in reality parts of themselves. And the adversaries of this supposed selfish philosophy, where it makes self-love the ruling passion with mankind, have had reason to find fault, not so much with its general representations of human nature, as with the obtrusion of a mere innovation in language for a discovery in science.

When the vulgar speak of their different motives, they are satisfied with ordinary names, which refer to known and obvious distinctions. Of this kind are the terms *benevolence* and *selfishness*, by which they express their desire of the welfare of others, or the care of their own. The speculative are not always satisfied with this proceeding; they would analyze, as well as enumerate the principles of nature; and the chance is, that, merely to gain the appearance of something new, without any prospect of real advantage, they will disturb the order of vulgar apprehension. In the case before us, they have actually found, that benevolence is no more than a species of self-love; and would oblige us, if possible, to look out for a new set of words, by which we may distinguish the selfishness of the parent when he takes care of his child, from his selfishness when he only takes care of himself. For according to this philosophy, as in both cases he only means to gratify a desire of his own, he is in both cases equally selfish. The term *benevolent*, in the mean time, is not employed to characterise persons who have no desires of their own, but persons whose own desires prompt them to procure the welfare of others. The fact is, that we should need only a fresh supply of language,

guage, inſtead of that which by this ſeeming diſcovery we ſhould have loſt, in order to make the reaſonings of men proceed as they formerly did. But it is certainly impoſſible to live and to act with men, without employing different names to diſtinguiſh the humane from the cruel, and the benevolent from the ſelfiſh.

THESE terms have their equivalents in every tongue; they were invented by men of no refinement, who only meant to expreſs what they diſtinctly perceived or ſtrongly felt. And if a man of ſpeculation ſhould prove that we are ſelfiſh in a ſenſe of his own, it does not follow that we are ſo in the ſenſe of the vulgar; or, as ordinary men would underſtand his concluſion, that we are condemned in every inſtance to act on motives of intereſt, covetouſneſs, puſillanimity, and cowardice; for ſuch is conceived to be the ordinary import of ſelfiſhneſs in the character of man.

AN affection or paſſion of any kind is ſometimes ſaid to give us an intereſt in its object; and humanity itſelf gives an intereſt in the welfare of mankind. This term *intereſt*, which commonly implies little more than our regard to property, is ſometimes put for utility in general, and this for happineſs; inſomuch that, under theſe ambiguities, it is not ſurpriſing we are ſtill unable to determine, whether intereſt is the only motive of human action, and the ſtandard by which to diſtinguiſh our good from our ill.

So

So much is said in this place, not from any desire to have a share in any controversy of this sort, but merely to confine the meaning of the term *interest* to its most common acceptation, and to intimate our intention of employing it in expressing those objects of care which refer to our external condition, and the preservation of our animal nature. When taken in this sense, it will not surely be thought to comprehend at once all the motives of human conduct. If men be not allowed to have disinterested benevolence, they will not be denied to have disinterested passions of another kind. Hatred, indignation, and rage, frequently urge them to act in opposition to their known interest, and even to hazard their lives, without any hopes of compensation in any future returns of preferment or profit.

SECT. III.

Of the principles of Union among Mankind.

Mankind have always wandered or settled, agreed or quarrelled, in troops and companies. The cause of their assembling, whatever it be, is the principle of their alliance or union.

In collecting the materials of history, we are seldom willing to put up with our subject merely as we find it. We are loth to be embarrassed with a multiplicity of particulars,

ticulars, and apparent inconſiſtencies. In theory we profeſs the inveſtigation of general principles; and in order to bring the matter of our inquiries within the reach of our comprehenſion, are diſpoſed to adopt any ſyſtem. Thus, in treating of human affairs, we would draw every conſequence from a principle of union, or a principle of diſſenſion. The ſtate of nature is a ſtate of war or of amity, and men are made to unite from a principle of affection, or from a principle of fear, as is moſt ſuitable to the ſyſtem of different writers. The hiſtory of our ſpecies indeed abundantly ſhews, that they are to one another mutual objects both of fear and of love; and they who would prove them to have been originally either in a ſtate of alliance, or of war, have arguments in ſtore to maintain their aſſertions. Our attachment to one diviſion, or to one ſect, ſeems often to derive much of its force from an animoſity conceived to an oppoſite one: and this animoſity in its turn, as often ariſes from a zeal in behalf of the ſide we eſpouſe, and from a deſire to vindicate the rights of our party.

"MAN is born in ſociety," ſays Monteſquieu, "and "there he remains." The charms that detain him are known to be manifold. We may reckon the parental affection, which, inſtead of deſerting the adult, as among the brutes, embraces more cloſe, as it becomes mixed with eſteem, and the memory of its early effects; together with a propenſity common to man and other animals, to mix with the herd, and, without reflection, to follow the croud of his ſpecies. What this propenſity was in the

the firſt moment of its operation, we know not; but with men accuſtomed to company, its enjoyments and diſappointments are reckoned among the principal pleaſures or pains of human life. Sadneſs and melancholy are connected with ſolitude; gladneſs and pleaſure with the concourſe of men. The track of a Laplander on the ſnowy ſhore, gives joy to the lonely mariner; and the mute ſigns of cordiality and kindneſs which are made to him, awaken the memory of pleaſures which he felt in ſociety. In fine, ſays the writer of a voyage to the north, after deſcribing a mute ſcene of this ſort, "We were ex-"tremely pleaſed to converſe with men, ſince in thirteen "months we had ſeen no human creature *." But we need no remote obſervation to confirm this poſition: The wailings of the infant, and the languors of the adult, when alone; the lively joys of the one, and the chearfulneſs of the other, upon the return of company, are a ſufficient proof of its ſolid foundations in the frame of our nature.

In accounting for actions we often forget that we ourſelves have acted; and inſtead of the ſentiments which ſtimulate the mind in the preſence of its object, we aſſign as the motives of conduct with men, thoſe conſiderations which occur in the hours of retirement and cold reflection. In this mood frequently we can find nothing important, beſides the deliberate proſpects of intereſt; and a great work, like that of forming ſociety, muſt in

* Collection of Dutch voyages.

our apprehenſion ariſe from deep reflections, and be carried on with a view to the advantages which mankind derive from commerce and mutual ſupport. But neither a propenſity to mix with the herd, nor the ſenſe of advantages enjoyed in that condition, comprehend all the principles by which men are united together. Thoſe bands are even of a feeble texture, when compared to the reſolute ardour with which a man adheres to his friend, or to his tribe, after they have for ſome time run the career of fortune together. Mutual diſcoveries of generoſity, joint trials of fortitude, redouble the ardours of friendſhip, and kindle a flame in the human breaſt, which the conſiderations of perſonal intereſt or ſafety cannot ſuppreſs. The moſt lively tranſports of joy are ſeen, and the loudeſt ſhrieks of deſpair are heard, when the objects of a tender affection are beheld in a ſtate of triumph or of ſuffering. An Indian recovered his friend unexpectedly on the iſland of Juan Fernandes: He proſtrated himſelf on the ground, at his feet: "We "ſtood gazing in ſilence," ſays Dampier, "at this ten-"der ſcene." If we would know what is the religion of a wild American, what it is in his heart that moſt reſembles devotion: it is not his fear of the ſorcerer, nor his hope of protection from the ſpirits of the air or the wood; it is the ardent affection with which he ſelects and embraces his friend; with which he clings to his ſide in every ſeaſon of peril; and with which he invokes his ſpirit from a diſtance, when dangers ſurpriſe him alone *. Whatever proofs we may have of the ſocial diſ-

* Charlevoix; Hiſt. of Canada.

poſition

poſition of man in familiar and contiguous ſcenes, it is poſſibly of importance, to draw our obſervations from the examples of men who live in the ſimpleſt condition, and who have not learned to affect what they do not actually feel.

MERE acquaintance and habitude nouriſh affection, and the experience of ſociety brings every paſſion of the human mind upon its ſide. Its triumphs and proſperities, its calamities and diſtreſſes, bring a variety and a force of emotion, which can only have place in the company of our fellow-creatures. It is here that a man is made to forget his weakneſs, his cares of ſafety, and his ſubſiſtence; and to act from thoſe paſſions which make him diſcover his force. It is here he finds that his arrows fly ſwifter than the eagle, and his weapons wound deeper than the paw of the lion, or the tooth of the boar. It is not alone his ſenſe of a ſupport which is near, nor the love of diſtinction in the opinion of his tribe, that inſpire his courage, or ſwell his heart with a confidence that exceeds what his natural force ſhould beſtow. Vehement paſſions of animoſity or attachment are the firſt exertions of vigour in his breaſt; under their influence, every conſideration, but that of his object, is forgotten; dangers and difficulties only excite him the more.

THAT condition is ſurely favourable to the nature of any being, in which his force is increaſed; and if courage be the gift of ſociety to man, we have reaſon to conſider his union with his ſpecies as the nobleſt part of his for-

tune. From this ſource are derived, not only the force, but the very exiſtence of his happieſt emotions; not only the better part, but almoſt the whole of his rational character. Send him to the deſert alone, he is a plant torn from its roots: the form indeed may remain, but every faculty droops and withers; the human perſonage and the human character ceaſe to exiſt.

MEN are ſo far from valuing ſociety on account of its mere external conveniencies, that they are commonly moſt attached where thoſe conveniencies are leaſt frequent; and are there moſt faithful, where the tribute of their allegiance is paid in blood. Affection operates with the greateſt force, where it meets with the greateſt difficulties: In the breaſt of the parent, it is moſt ſolicitous amidſt the dangers and diſtreſſes of the child: In the breaſt of a man, its flame redoubles where the wrongs or ſufferings of his friend, or his country, require his aid. It is, in ſhort, from this principle alone that we can account for the obſtinate attachment of a ſavage to his unſettled and defenceleſs tribe, when temptations on the ſide of eaſe and of ſafety might induce him to fly from famine and danger, to a ſtation more affluent, and more ſecure. Hence the ſanguine affection which every Greek bore to his country, and hence the devoted patriotiſm of an early Roman. Let thoſe examples be compared with the ſpirit which reigns in a commercial ſtate, where men may be ſuppoſed to have experienced, in its full extent, the intereſt which individuals have in the preſervation of their country.

country. It is here indeed, if ever, that man is ſometimes found a detached and a ſolitary being: he has found an object which ſets him in competition with his fellow-creatures, and he deals with them as he does with his cattle and his ſoil, for the ſake of the profits they bring. The mighty engine which we ſuppoſe to have formed ſociety, only tends to ſet its members at variance, or to continue their intercourſe after the bands of affection are broken.

SECT. IV.

Of the principles of War and Diſſenſion.

"THERE are ſome circumſtances in the lot of mankind," ſays Socrates, "that ſhew them to be deſtined to friendſhip and amity: Thoſe are, their mutual "need of one another; their mutual compaſſion; their "ſenſe of mutual benefits; and the pleaſures ariſing in "company. There are other circumſtances which "prompt them to war and diſſenſion; the admiration "and the deſire which they entertain for the ſame ſubjects; their oppoſite pretenſions; and the provocations "which they mutually offer in the courſe of their competitions."

WHEN we endeavour to apply the maxims of natural juſtice to the ſolution of difficult queſtions, we find that ſome caſes may be ſuppoſed, and actually happen, where oppoſitions

oppoſitions take place, and are lawful, prior to any provocation, or act of injuſtice; that where the ſafety and preſervation of numbers are mutually inconſiſtent, one party may employ his right of defence, before the other has begun an attack. And when we join with ſuch examples, the inſtances of miſtake, and miſunderſtanding, to which mankind are expoſed, we may be ſatisfied that war does not always proceed from an intention to injure; and that even the beſt qualities of men, their candour, as well as their reſolution, may operate in the midſt of their quarrels.

THERE is ſtill more to be obſerved on this ſubject. Mankind not only find in their condition the ſources of variance and diſſenſion; they appear to have in their minds the ſeeds of animoſity, and to embrace the occaſions of mutual oppoſition, with alacrity and pleaſure. In the moſt pacific ſituation there are few who have not their enemies, as well as their friends; and who are not pleaſed with oppoſing the proceedings of one, as much as with favouring the deſigns of another. Small and ſimple tribes, who in their domeſtic ſociety have the firmeſt union, are in their ſtate of oppoſition as ſeparate nations, frequently animated with the moſt implacable hatred. Among the citizens of Rome, in the early ages of that republic, the name of a foreigner, and that of an enemy, were the ſame. Among the Greeks, the name of Barbarian, under which that people comprehended every nation that was of a race, and ſpoke a language, different from their own, became a term of indiſcriminate contempt

and

and averſion. Even where no particular claim to ſuperiority is formed, the repugnance to union, the frequent wars, or rather the perpetual hoſtilities, which take place among rude nations and ſeparate clans, diſcover how much our ſpecies is diſpoſed to oppoſition, as well as to concert.

LATE diſcoveries have brought us to the knowledge of almoſt every ſituation in which mankind are placed. We have found them ſpread over large and extenſive continents, where communications are open, and where national confederacy might be eaſily formed. We have found them in narrower diſtricts, circumſcribed by mountains, great rivers, and arms of the ſea. They have been found in ſmall and remote iſlands, where the inhabitants might be eaſily aſſembled, and derive an advantage from their union. But in all thoſe ſituations, alike, they were broke into cantons, and affected a diſtinction of name and community. The titles of *fellow-citizen* and *countryman*, unoppoſed to thoſe of *alien* and *foreigner*, to which they refer, would fall into diſuſe, and loſe their meaning. We love individuals on account of perſonal qualities; but we love our country, as it is a party in the diviſions of mankind; and our zeal for its intereſt, is a predilection in behalf of the ſide we maintain.

IN the promiſcuous concourſe of men, it is ſufficient that we have an opportunity of ſelecting our company. We turn away from thoſe who do not engage us, and we fix our reſort where the ſociety is more to our mind.

We

We are fond of diſtinctions; we place ourſelves in oppoſition, and quarrel under the denominations of faction and party, without any material ſubject of controverſy. Averſion, like affection, is foſtered by a continued direction to its particular object. Separation and eſtrangement, as well as oppoſition, widen a breach which did not owe its beginnings to any offence. And it would ſeem, that till we have reduced mankind to the ſtate of a family, or found ſome external conſideration to maintain their connection in greater numbers, they will be for ever ſeparated into bands, and form a plurality of nations.

THE ſenſe of a common danger, and the aſſaults of an enemy, have been frequently uſeful to nations, by uniting their members more firmly together, and by preventing the ſeceſſions and actual ſeparations in which their civil diſcord might otherwiſe terminate. And this motive to union which is offered from abroad, may be neceſſary, not only in the caſe of large and extenſive nations, where coalitions are weakened by diſtance, and the diſtinction of provincial names; but even in the narrow ſociety of the ſmalleſt ſtates. Rome itſelf was founded by a ſmall party, which took its flight from Alba; her citizens were often in danger of ſeparating; and if the villages and cantons of the Volſci had been further removed from the ſcene of their diſſenſions, the Mons Sacer might have received a new colony before the mother-country was ripe for ſuch a diſcharge. She continued long to feel the quarrels of her nobles and her people;

and

and the gates of Janus were frequently opened, to remind her inhabitants of the duties they owed to their country.

If ſocieties, as well as individuals, be charged with the care of their own preſervation, and if in both we apprehend a ſeparation of intereſt, which may give riſe to jealouſies and competitions, we cannot be ſurpriſed to find hoſtilities ariſe from this ſource. But were there no angry paſſions of a different ſort, the animoſities which attend an oppoſition of intereſt, ſhould bear a proportion to the ſuppoſed value of the ſubject. "The Hottentot nations," ſays Kolben, "treſpaſs on one another "by thefts of cattle and of women; but ſuch injuries "are ſeldom committed, except with a view to exaſperate their neighbours, and bring them to a war." Such depredations then are not the foundation of a war, but the effects of a hoſtile intention already conceived. The nations of North America, who have no herds to preſerve, nor ſettlements to defend, are yet engaged in almoſt perpetual wars, for which they can aſſign no reaſon, but the point of honour, and a deſire to continue the ſtruggle their fathers maintained. They do not regard the ſpoils of an enemy; and the warrior who has ſeized any booty, eaſily parts with it to the firſt perſon who comes in his way *.

* See Charlevoix's hiſtory of Canada.

BUT we need not croſs the Atlantic to find proofs of animoſity, and to obſerve, in the colliſion of ſeparate ſocieties, the influence of angry paſſions, that do not ariſe from an oppoſition of intereſt. Human nature has no part of its character, of which more flagrant examples are given on this ſide of the globe. What is it that ſtirs in the breaſts of ordinary men when the enemies of their country are named? Whence are the prejudices that ſubſiſt between different provinces, cantons, and villages, of the ſame empire and territory? What is it that excites one half of the nations of Europe againſt the other? The ſtateſman may explain his conduct on motives of national jealouſy and caution, but the people have diſlikes and antipathies, for which they cannot account. Their mutual reproaches of perfidy and injuſtice, like the Hottentot depredations, are but ſymptoms of an animoſity, and the language of a hoſtile diſpoſition, already conceived. The charge of cowardice and puſillanimity, qualities which the intereſted and cautious enemy ſhould, of all others, like beſt to find in his rival, is urged with averſion, and made the ground of diſlike. Hear the peaſants on different ſides of the Alps, and the Pyrenees, the Rhine, or the Britiſh channel, give vent to their prejudices and national paſſions; it is among them that we find the materials of war and diſſenſion laid without the direction of government, and ſparks ready to kindle into a flame, which the ſtateſman is frequently diſpoſed to extinguiſh. The fire will not always catch where his reaſons of ſtate would direct, nor ſtop where the concurrence of intereſt has produced an alliance.

ance. "My Father," ſaid a Spaniſh peaſant, "would "riſe from his grave, if he could foreſee a war with "France." What intereſt had he, or the bones of his father, in the quarrels of princes?

THESE obſervations ſeem to arraign our ſpecies, and to give an unfavourable picture of mankind; and yet the particulars we have mentioned are conſiſtent with the moſt amiable qualities of our nature, and often furniſh a ſcene for the exerciſe of our greateſt abilities. They are ſentiments of generoſity and ſelf-denial that animate the warrior in defence of his country; and they are diſpoſitions moſt favourable to mankind, that become the principles of apparent hoſtility to men. Every animal is made to delight in the exerciſe of his natural talents and forces: The lion and the tyger ſport with the paw; the horſe delights to commit his mane to the wind, and forgets his paſture to try his ſpeed in the field; the bull even before his brow is armed, and the lamb while yet an emblem of innocence, have a diſpoſition to ſtrike with the forehead, and anticipate, in play, the conflicts they are doomed to ſuſtain. Man too is diſpoſed to oppoſition, and to employ the forces of his nature againſt an equal antagoniſt; he loves to bring his reaſon, his eloquence, his courage, even his bodily ſtrength, to the proof. His ſports are frequently an image of war; ſweat and blood are freely expended in play; and fractures or death are often made to terminate the paſtimes of idleneſs and feſtivity. He was not made to live for

ever, and even his love of amuſement has opened a path that leads to the grave.

WITHOUT the rivalſhip of nations, and the practice of war, civil ſociety itſelf could ſcarcely have found an object, or a form. Mankind might have traded without any formal convention, but they cannot be ſafe without a national concert. The neceſſity of a public defence, has given riſe to many departments of ſtate, and the intellectual talents of men have found their buſieſt ſcene in wielding their national forces. To overawe, or intimidate, or, when we cannot perſuade with reaſon, to reſiſt with fortitude, are the occupations which give its moſt animating exerciſe, and its greateſt triumphs, to a vigorous mind; and he who has never ſtruggled with his fellow-creatures, is a ſtranger to half the ſentiments of mankind.

THE quarrels of individuals, indeed, are frequently the operations of unhappy and deteſtable paſſions; malice, hatred, and rage. If ſuch paſſions alone poſſeſs the breaſt, the ſcene of diſſenſion becomes an object of horror; but a common oppoſition maintained by numbers, is always allayed by paſſions of another ſort. Sentiments of affection and friendſhip mix with animoſity; the active and ſtrenuous become the guardians of their ſociety; and violence itſelf is, in their caſe, an exertion of generoſity as well as of courage. We applaud, as proceeding from a national or party ſpirit, what we could not endure as the effect of a private diſlike; and amidſt the competitions

competitions of rival ſtates, think we have found, for the patriot and the warrior, in the practice of violence and ſtratagem, the moſt illuſtrious career of human virtue. Even perſonal oppoſition here does not divide our judgement on the merits of men. The rival names of Ageſilaus and Epaminondas, of Scipio and Hannibal, are repeated with equal praiſe; and war itſelf, which in one view appears ſo fatal, in another is the exerciſe of a liberal ſpirit; and in the very effects which we regret, is but one diſtemper more by which the author of nature has appointed our exit from human life.

THESE reflections may open our view into the ſtate of mankind; but they tend to reconcile us to the conduct of Providence, rather than to make us change our own: where, from a regard to the welfare of our fellow-creatures, we endeavour to pacify their animoſities, and unite them by the ties of affection. In the purſuit of this amiable intention, we may hope, in ſome inſtances, to diſarm the angry paſſions of jealouſy and envy; we may hope to inſtil into the breaſts of private men ſentiments of candour toward their fellow-creatures, and a diſpoſition to humanity and juſtice. But it is vain to expect that we can give to the multitude of a people a ſenſe of union among themſelves, without admitting hoſtility to thoſe who oppoſe them. Could we at once, in the caſe of any nation, extinguiſh the emulation which is excited from abroad, we ſhould probably break or weaken the bands of ſociety at home, and cloſe the buſieſt ſcenes of national occupations and virtues.

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SECT. V.

Of Intellectual Powers.

MANY attempts have been made to analyze the diſpoſitions which we have now enumerated; but one purpoſe of ſcience, perhaps the moſt important, is ſerved, when the exiſtence of a diſpoſition is eſtabliſhed. We are more concerned in its reality, and in its conſequences, than we are in its origin, or manner of formation.

THE ſame obſervation may be applied to the other powers and faculties of our nature. Their exiſtence and uſe are the principal objects of our ſtudy. Thinking and reaſoning, we ſay, are the operations of ſome faculty; but in what manner the faculties of thought or reaſon remain, when they are not exerted, or by what difference in the frame they are unequal in different perſons, are queſtions which we cannot reſolve. Their operations alone diſcover them: when unapplied, they lie hid even from the perſon to whom they pertain; and their action is ſo much a part of their nature, that the faculty itſelf, in many caſes, is ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed from a habit acquired in its frequent exertion.

PERSONS who are occupied with different ſubjects, who act in different ſcenes, generally appear to have different

ferent talents, or at leaſt to have the ſame faculties variouſly formed, and ſuited to different purpoſes. The peculiar genius of nations, as well as of individuals, may in this manner ariſe from the ſtate of their fortunes. And it is proper that we endeavour to find ſome rule, by which to judge of what is admirable in the capacities of men, or fortunate in the application of their faculties, before we venture to paſs a judgement on this branch of their merits, or pretend to meaſure the degree of reſpect they may claim by their different attainments.

To receive the informations of ſenſe, is perhaps the earlieſt function of an animal combined with an intellectual nature; and one great accompliſhment of the living agent conſiſts in the force and ſenſibility of his animal organs. The pleaſures or pains to which he is expoſed from this quarter, conſtitute to him an important difference between the objects which are thus brought to his knowledge; and it concerns him to diſtinguiſh well, before he commits himſelf to the direction of appetite. He muſt ſcrutinize the objects of one ſenſe by the perceptions of another; examine with the eye, before he ventures to touch; and employ every means of obſervation, before he gratifies the appetites of thirſt and of hunger. A diſcernment acquired by experience, becomes a faculty of his mind; and the inferences of thought are ſometimes not to be diſtinguiſhed from the perceptions of ſenſe.

THE objects around us, beſide their ſeparate appearances, have their relations to one another. They ſuggeſt, when compared, what would not occur when they are conſidered apart; they have their effects, and mutual influences; they exhibit, in like circumſtances, ſimilar operations, and uniform conſequences. When we have found and expreſſed the points in which the uniformity of their operations conſiſts, we have aſcertained a phyſical law. Many ſuch laws, and even the moſt important, are known to the vulgar, and occur upon the ſmalleſt degrees of reflection: but others are hid under a ſeeming confuſion, which ordinary talents cannot remove; and are therefore the objects of ſtudy, long obſervation, and ſuperior capacity. The faculties of penetration and judgement, are, by men of buſineſs, as well as of ſcience, employed to unravel intricacies of this ſort; and the degree of ſagacity with which either is endowed, is to be meaſured by the ſucceſs with which they are able to find general rules, applicable to a variety of caſes that ſeemed to have nothing in common, and to diſcover important diſtinctions between ſubjects which the vulgar are apt to confound.

To collect a multiplicity of particulars under general heads, and to refer a variety of operations to their common principle, is the object of ſcience. To do the ſame thing, at leaſt within the range of his active engagements, pertains to the man of pleaſure, or buſineſs: and it would ſeem, that the ſtudious and the active are

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ſo far employed in the ſame taſk, from obſervation and experience, to find the general views under which their objects may be conſidered, and the rules which may be uſefully applied in the detail of their conduct. They do not always apply their talents to different ſubjects; and they ſeem to be diſtinguiſhed chiefly by the unequal reach and variety of their remarks, or by the intentions which they ſeverally have in collecting them.

WHILST men continue to act from appetites and paſſions, leading to the attainment of external ends, they ſeldom quit the view of their objects in detail, to go far in the road of general inquiries. They meaſure the extent of their own abilities, by the promptitude with which they apprehend what is important in every ſubject, and the facility with which they extricate themſelves on every trying occaſion. And theſe, it muſt be confeſſed, to a being who is deſtined to act in the midſt of difficulties, are the proper teſt of capacity and force. The parade of words, and general reaſonings, which ſometimes carry an appearance of ſo much learning and knowledge, are of little avail in the conduct of life. The talents from which they proceed, terminate in mere oſtentation, and are ſeldom connected with that ſuperior diſcernment which the active apply in times of perplexity; much leſs with that intrepidity and force of mind which are required in paſſing through difficult ſcenes.

THE abilities of active men, however, have a variety correſponding to that of the ſubjects on which they are

occupied. A ſagacity applied to external and inanimate nature, forms one ſpecies of capacity; that which is turned to ſociety and human affairs, another. Reputation for parts in any ſcene is equivocal, till we know by what kind of exertion that reputation is gained. That they underſtand well the ſubjects to which they apply, is all that can be ſaid, in commending men of the greateſt abilities: and every department, every profeſſion, would have its great men, if there were not a choice of objects for the underſtanding, and of talents for the mind, as well as of ſentiments for the heart, and of habits for the active character.

THE meaneſt profeſſions, indeed, ſo far ſometimes forget themſelves, or the reſt of mankind, as to arrogate, in commending what is diſtinguiſhed in their own way, every epithet the moſt reſpectable claim as the right of ſuperior abilities. Every mechanic is a great man with the learner, and the humble admirer, in his particular calling; and we can, perhaps, with more aſſurance pronounce what it is that ſhould make a man happy and amiable, than what ſhould make his abilities reſpected, and his genius admired. This, upon a view of the talents themſelves, may perhaps be impoſſible. The effect, however, will point out the rule and the ſtandard of our judgement. To be admired and reſpected, is to have an aſcendant among men. The talents which moſt directly procure that aſcendant, are thoſe which operate on mankind, penetrate their views, prevent their wiſhes, or fruſtrate their deſigns. The ſuperior capacity leads with

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a ſuperior energy, where every individual would go, and ſhews the heſitating and the irreſolute a clear paſſage to the attainment of their ends.

THIS deſcription does not pertain to any particular craft or profeſſion; or perhaps it implies a kind of ability, which the ſeparate application of men to particular callings, only tends to ſuppreſs or to weaken. Where ſhall we find the talents which are fit to act with men in a collective body, if we break that body into parts, and confine the obſervation of each to a ſeparate track?

To act in the view of his fellow-creatures, to produce his mind in public, to give it all the exerciſe of ſentiment and thought, which pertain to man as a member of ſociety, as a friend, or an enemy, ſeems to be the principal calling and occupation of his nature. If he muſt labour, that he may ſubſiſt, he can ſubſiſt for no better purpoſe than the good of mankind; nor can he have better talents than thoſe which qualify him to act with men. Here, indeed, the underſtanding appears to borrow very much from the paſſions; and there is a felicity of conduct in human affairs, in which it is difficult to diſtinguiſh the promptitude of the head from the ardour and ſenſibility of the heart. Where both are united, they conſtitute that ſuperiority of mind, the frequency of which among men, in particular ages and nations, much more than the progreſs they have made in ſpeculation, or in the practice of mechanic and liberal arts, ſhould

determine the rate of their genius, and assign the palm of distinction and honour.

When nations succeed one another in the career of discoveries and inquiries, the last is always the most knowing. Systems of science are gradually formed. The globe itself is traversed by degrees, and the history of every age, when past, is an accession of knowledge to those who succeed. The Romans were more knowing than the Greeks; and every scholar of modern Europe is, in this sense, more learned than the most accomplished person that ever bore either of those celebrated names. But is he on that account their superior?

Men are to be estimated, not from what they know, but from what they are able to perform; from their skill in adapting materials to the several purposes of life; from their vigour and conduct in pursuing the objects of policy, and in finding the expedients of war and national defence. Even in literature, they are to be estimated from the works of their genius, not from the extent of their knowledge. The scene of mere observation was extremely limited in a Grecian republic; and the bustle of an active life appeared inconsistent with study: but there the human mind, notwithstanding, collected its greatest abilities, and received its best informations, in the midst of sweat and of dust.

It is peculiar to modern Europe, to rest so much of the human character on what may be learned in retirement,

tirement, and from the information of books. A juſt admiration of ancient literature, an opinion that human ſentiment, and human reaſon, without this aid, were to have vaniſhed from the ſocieties of men, have led us into the ſhade, where we endeavour to derive from imagination and thought, what is in reality matter of experience and ſentiment: and we endeavour, through the grammar of dead languages, and the channel of commentators, to arrive at the beauties of thought and elocution, which ſprang from the animated ſpirit of ſociety, and were taken from the living impreſſions of an active life. Our attainments are frequently limited to the elements of every ſcience, and ſeldom reach to that enlargement of ability and power which uſeful knowledge ſhould give. Like mathematicians, who ſtudy the Elements of Euclid, but never think of menſuration, we read of ſocieties, but do not propoſe to act with men: we repeat the language of politics, but feel not the ſpirit of nations: we attend to the formalities of a military diſcipline, but know not how to employ numbers of men to obtain any purpoſe by ſtratagem or force.

But for what end, it may ſaid, point out a miſfortune that cannot be remedied? If national affairs called for exertion, the genius of men would awake; but in the receſs of better employment, the time which is beſtowed on ſtudy, if even attended with no other advantage, ſerves to occupy with innocence the hours of leiſure, and ſet bounds to the purſuit of ruinous and frivolous amuſements. From no better reaſon than this,

we employ so many of our early years, under the rod, to acquire what it is not expected we should retain beyond the threshold of the school; and whilst we carry the same frivolous character in our studies that we do in our amusements, the human mind could not suffer more from a contempt of letters, than it does from the false importance which is given to literature, as a business for life, not as a help to our conduct, and the means of forming a character that may be happy in itself, and useful to mankind.

If that time which is passed in relaxing the powers of the mind, and in with-holding every object but what tends to weaken and to corrupt, were employed in fortifying those powers, and in teaching the mind to recognise its objects, and its strength, we should not, at the years of maturity, be so much at a loss for occupation; nor, in attending the chances of a gaming-table, misemploy our talents, or waste the fire which remains in the breast. They, at least, who by their stations have a share in the government of their country, might believe themselves capable of business; and while the state had its armies and councils, might find objects enough to amuse, without throwing a personal fortune into hazard, merely to cure the yawnings of a listless and insignificant life. It is impossible for ever to maintain the tone of speculation; it is impossible not sometimes to feel that we live among men.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of Moral Sentiment.

UPON a ſlight obſervation of what paſſes in human life, we ſhould be apt to conclude, that the care of ſubſiſtence is the principal ſpring of human actions. This conſideration leads to the invention and practice of mechanical arts; it ſerves to diſtinguiſh amuſement from buſineſs; and, with many, ſcarcely admits into competition any other ſubject of purſuit or attention. The mighty advantages of property and fortune, when ſtript of the recommendations they derive from vanity, or the more ſerious regards to independence and power, only mean a proviſion that is made for animal enjoyment; and if our ſolicitude on this ſubject were removed, not only the toils of the mechanic, but the ſtudies of the learned, would ceaſe; every department of public buſineſs would become unneceſſary; every ſenate-houſe would be ſhut up, and every palace deſerted.

Is man therefore, in reſpect to his object, to be claſſed with the mere brutes, and only to be diſtinguiſhed by faculties that qualify him to multiply contrivances for the ſupport and convenience of animal life, and by the extent of a fancy that renders the care of animal preſervation to him more burdenſome than it is to the herd with which he ſhares in the bounty of nature? If this were

were his caſe, the joy which attends on ſucceſs, or the griefs which ariſe from diſappointment, would make the ſum of his paſſions. The torrent that waſted, or the inundation that enriched his poſſeſſions, would give him all the emotion with which he is ſeized, on the occaſion of a wrong by which his fortunes are impaired, or of a benefit by which they are preſerved and enlarged. His fellow-creatures would be conſidered merely as they affected his intereſt. Profit or loſs would ſerve to mark the event of every tranſaction; and the epithets *uſeful* or *detrimental* would ſerve to diſtinguiſh his mates in ſociety, as they do the tree which bears plenty of fruit, from that which ſerves only to cumber the ground, or intercept his view.

THIS, however, is not the hiſtory of our ſpecies. What comes from a fellow-creature is received with peculiar attention; and every language abounds with terms that expreſs ſomewhat in the tranſactions of men, different from ſucceſs and diſappointment. The boſom kindles in company, while the point of intereſt in view has nothing to inflame; and a matter frivolous in itſelf, becomes important, when it ſerves to bring to light the intentions and characters of men. The foreigner, who believed that Othello, on the ſtage, was enraged for the loſs of his handkerchief, was not more miſtaken, than the reaſoner who imputes any of the more vehement paſſions of men to the impreſſions of mere profit or loſs.

MEN

MEN aſſemble to deliberate on buſineſs; they ſeparate from jealouſies of intereſt; but in their ſeveral colliſions, whether as friends or as enemies, a fire is ſtruck out which the regards to intereſt or ſafety cannot confine. The value of a favour is not meaſured when ſentiments of kindneſs are perceived; and the term *misfortune* has but a feeble meaning, when compared to that of *inſult* and *wrong*.

As actors or ſpectators, we are perpetually made to feel the difference of human conduct, and from a bare recital of tranſactions which have paſſed in ages and countries remote from our own, are moved with admiration and pity, or tranſported with indignation and rage. Our ſenſibility on this ſubject gives their charm, in retirement, to the relations of hiſtory, and to the fictions of poetry; ſends forth the tear of compaſſion, gives to the blood its briſkeſt movement, and to the eye its livelieſt glances of diſpleaſure or joy. It turns human life into an intereſting ſpectacle, and perpetually ſolicits even the indolent to mix, as opponents or friends, in the ſcenes which are acted before them. Joined to the powers of deliberation and reaſon, it conſtitutes the baſis of a moral nature; and whilſt it dictates the terms of praiſe and of blame, ſerves to claſs our fellow-creatures by the moſt admirable and engaging, or the moſt odious and contemptible, denominations.

IT is pleaſant to find men, who, in their ſpeculations, deny the reality of moral diſtinctions, forget in detail the

general poſitions they maintain, and give looſe to ridicule, indignation, and ſcorn, as if any of theſe ſentiments could have place, were the actions of men indifferent; and with acrimony pretend to detect the fraud by which moral reſtraints have been impoſed, as if to cenſure a fraud were not already to take a part on the ſide of morality *.

CAN we explain the principles upon which mankind adjudge the preference of characters, and upon which they indulge ſuch vehement emotions of admiration or contempt? If it be admitted that we cannot, are the facts leſs true? or muſt we ſuſpend the movements of the heart until they who are employed in framing ſyſtems of ſcience have diſcovered the principle from which thoſe movements proceed? If a finger burn, we care not for information on the properties of fire: if the heart be torn, or the mind overjoyed, we have not leiſure for ſpeculations on the ſubject of moral ſenſibility.

IT is fortunate in this, as in other articles to which ſpeculation and theory are applied, that nature proceeds in her courſe, whilſt the curious are buſied in the ſearch of her principles. The peaſant, or the child, can reaſon, and judge, and ſpeak his language, with a diſcernment, a conſiſtency, and a regard to analogy, which perplex the logician, the moraliſt, and the grammarian, when they would find the principle upon which the proceeding

* Mandeville.

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is founded, or when they would bring to general rules, what is ſo familiar, and ſo well ſuſtained in particular caſes. The felicity of our conduct is more owing to the talent we poſſeſs for detail, and to the ſuggeſtion of particular occaſions, than it is to any direction we can find in theory and general ſpeculations.

We muſt, in the reſult of every inquiry, encounter with facts which we cannot explain; and to bear with this mortification would ſave us frequently a great deal of fruitleſs trouble. Together with the ſenſe of our exiſtence, we muſt admit many circumſtances which come to our knowledge at the ſame time, and in the ſame manner; and which do, in reality, conſtitute the mode of our being. Every peaſant will tell us, that a man hath his rights; and that to treſpaſs on thoſe rights is injuſtice. If we aſk him farther, what he means by the term *right?* we probably force him to ſubſtitute a leſs ſignificant, or leſs proper term, in the place of this; or require him to account for what is an original mode of his mind, and a ſentiment to which he ultimately refers, when he would explain himſelf upon any particular application of his language.

The rights of individuals may relate to a variety of ſubjects, and be comprehended under different heads. Prior to the eſtabliſhment of property, and the diſtinction of ranks, men have a right to defend their perſons, and to act with freedom; they have a right to maintain the apprehenſions of reaſon, and the feelings of the

heart; and they cannot for a moment converſe with one another, without feeling that the part they maintain may be juſt or unjuſt. It is not, however, our buſineſs here to carry the notion of a right into its ſeveral applications, but to reaſon on the ſentiment of favour with which that notion is entertained in the mind.

If it be true, that men are united by inſtinct, that they act in ſociety from affections of kindneſs and friendſhip; if it be true, that even prior to acquaintance and habitude, men, as ſuch, are commonly to one another objects of attention, and ſome degree of regard; that while their proſperity is beheld with indifference, their afflictions are conſidered with commiſeration; if calamities be meaſured by the numbers and the qualities of men they involve; and if every ſuffering of a fellow-creature draws a croud of attentive ſpectators; if even in the caſe of thoſe to whom we do not habitually wiſh any poſitive good, we are ſtill averſe to be the inſtruments of harm; it ſhould ſeem, that in theſe various appearances of an amicable diſpoſition, the foundations of a moral apprehenſion are ſufficiently laid, and the ſenſe of a right which we maintain for ourſelves, is by a movement of humanity and candour extended to our fellow-creatures.

What is it that prompts the tongue when we cenſure an act of cruelty or oppreſſion? What is it that conſtitutes our reſtraint from offences that tend to diſtreſs our fellow-creatures? It is probably, in both caſes, a particular

particular application of that principle, which, in preſence of the ſorrowful, ſends forth the tear of compaſſion; and a combination of all thoſe ſentiments, which conſtitute a benevolent diſpoſition; and if not a reſolution to do good, at leaſt an averſion to be the inſtrument of harm *.

It may be difficult, however, to enumerate the motives of all the cenſures and commendations which are applied to the actions of men. Even while we moralize, every diſpoſition of the human mind may have its ſhare in forming the judgement, and in prompting the tongue. As jealouſy is often the moſt watchful guardian of chaſtity, ſo malice is often the quickeſt to ſpy the failings of our neighbour. Envy, affectation, and vanity, may

* Mankind, we are told, are devoted to intereſt; and this, in all commercial nations, is undoubtedly true: but it does not follow, that they are, by their natural diſpoſitions, averſe to ſociety and mutual affection: proofs of the contrary remain, even where intereſt triumphs moſt. What muſt we think of the force of that diſpoſition to compaſſion, to candour, and good-will, which, notwithſtanding the prevailing opinion that the happineſs of a man conſiſts in poſſeſſing the greateſt poſſible ſhare of riches, preferments, and honours, ſtill keeps the parties who are in competition for thoſe objects, on a tolerable footing of amity, and leads them to abſtain even from their own ſuppoſed good, when their ſeizing it appears in the light of a detriment to others? What might we not expect from the human heart in circumſtances which prevented this apprehenſion on the ſubject of fortune, or under the influence of an opinion as ſteady and general as the former, that human felicity does not conſiſt in the indulgences of animal appetite, but in thoſe of a benevolent heart; not in fortune or intereſt, but in the contempt of this very object, in the courage and freedom which ariſe from this contempt, joined to a reſolute choice of conduct, directed to the good of mankind, or to the good of that particular ſociety to which the party belongs?

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dictate the verdicts we give, and the worſt principles of our nature may be at the bottom of our pretended zeal for morality; but if we only mean to inquire, why they who are well diſpoſed to mankind, apprehend, in every inſtance, certain rights pertaining to their fellow-creatures, and why they applaud the conſideration that is paid to thoſe rights, we cannot perhaps aſſign a better reaſon, than that the perſon who applauds, is well diſpoſed to the welfare of the parties to whom his applauſes refer.

When we conſider, that the reality of any amicable propenſity in the human mind has been frequently conteſted; when we recollect the prevalence of intereſted competitions, with their attendant paſſions of jealouſy, envy, and malice; it may ſeem ſtrange to alledge, that love and compaſſion are the moſt powerful principles in the human breaſt: but they are deſtined, on many occaſions, to urge with the moſt irreſiſtible vehemence; and if the deſire of ſelf-preſervation be more conſtant, and more uniform, theſe are a more plentiful ſource of enthuſiaſm, ſatisfaction, and joy. With a power, not inferior to that of reſentment and rage, they hurry the mind into every ſacrifice of intereſt, and bear it undiſmayed through every hardſhip and danger.

The diſpoſition on which friendſhip is grafted, glows with ſatisfaction in the hours of tranquillity, and is pleaſant, not only in its triumphs, but even in its ſorrows. It throws a grace on the external air, and, by its expreſ-

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ſion on the countenance, compenſates for the want of beauty, or gives a charm which no complexion or features can equal. From this ſource the ſcenes of human life derive their principal felicity; and their imitations in poetry, their principal ornament. Deſcriptions of nature, even repreſentations of a vigorous conduct, and a manly courage, do not engage the heart, if they be not mixed with the exhibition of generous ſentiments, and the pathetic, which is found to ariſe in the ſtruggles, the triumphs, or the misfortunes of a tender affection. The death of Polites, in the Æneid, is not more affecting than that of many others who periſhed in the ruins of Troy; but the aged Priam was preſent when this laſt of his ſons was ſlain; and the agonies of grief and ſorrow force the parent from his retreat, to fall by the hand that ſhed the blood of his child. The pathetic of Homer conſiſts in exhibiting the force of affections, not in exciting mere terror and pity; paſſions he has never perhaps, in any inſtance, attempted to raiſe.

With this tendency to kindle into enthuſiaſm, with this command over the heart, with the pleaſure that attends its emotions, and with all its effects in meriting confidence, and procuring eſteem, it is not ſurpriſing, that a principle of humanity ſhould give the tone to our commendations and our cenſures, and even where it is hindered from directing our conduct, ſhould ſtill give to the mind, on reflection, its knowledge of what is deſirable in the human character. *What haſt thou done with thy brother Abel?* was the firſt expoſtulation in behalf of morality;

rality; and if the firſt anſwer has been often repeated, mankind have notwithſtanding, in one ſenſe, ſufficiently acknowledged the charge of their nature. They have felt, they have talked, and even acted, as the keepers of their fellow-creatures: They have made the indications of candour and mutual affection the teſt of what is meritorious and amiable in the characters of men: They have made cruelty and oppreſſion the principal objects of their indignation and rage: Even while the head is occupied with projects of intereſt, the heart is often ſeduced into friendſhip; and while buſineſs proceeds on the maxims of ſelf-preſervation, the careleſs hour is employed in generoſity and kindneſs.

HENCE the rule by which men commonly judge of external actions, is taken from the ſuppoſed influence of ſuch actions on the general good. To abſtain from harm, is the great law of natural juſtice; to diffuſe happineſs is the law of morality; and when we cenſure the conferring a favour on one or a few at the expence of many, we refer to public utility, as the great object at which the actions of men ſhould be aimed.

AFTER all, it muſt be confeſſed, that if a principle of affection to mankind, be the baſis of our moral approbation and diſlike, we ſometimes proceed in diſtributing applauſe or cenſure, without preciſely attending to the degree in which our fellow-creatures are hurt or obliged; and that, beſides the virtues of candour, friendſhip, generoſity, and public ſpirit, which bear an immediate reference

reference to this principle, there are others which may ſeem to derive their commendation from a different ſource. Temperance, prudence, fortitude, are thoſe qualities likewiſe admired from a principle of regard to our fellow-creatures? Why not, ſince they render men happy in themſelves, and uſeful to others? He who is qualified to promote the welfare of mankind, is neither a ſot, a fool, nor a coward. Can it be more clearly expreſſed, that temperance, prudence, and fortitude, are neceſſary to the character we love and admire? I know well why I ſhould wiſh for them in myſelf; and why likewiſe I ſhould wiſh for them in my friend, and in every perſon who is an object of my affection. But to what purpoſe ſeek for reaſons of approbation, where qualities are ſo neceſſary to our happineſs, and ſo great a part in the perfection of our nature? We muſt ceaſe to eſteem ourſelves, and to diſtinguiſh what is excellent, when ſuch qualifications incur our neglect.

A perſon of an affectionate mind, poſſeſſed of a maxim, That he himſelf, as an individual, is no more than a part of the whole that demands his regard, has found, in that principle, a ſufficient foundation for all the virtues; for a contempt of animal pleaſures, that would ſupplant his principal enjoyment; for an equal contempt of danger or pain, that come to ſtop his purſuits of public good. "A vehement and ſteady affection "magnifies its object and leſſens every difficulty or "danger that ſtands in the way." "Aſk thoſe who have

" been in love," ſays Epictetus, " they will know that I " ſpeak truth."

" I have before me," ſays another eminent moraliſt *, " an idea of juſtice, which, if I could follow in every " inſtance, I ſhould think myſelf the moſt happy of " men." And it is, perhaps, of conſequence to their happineſs, as well as to their conduct, if thoſe can be disjoined, that men ſhould have this idea properly formed: It is perhaps but another name for that good of mankind, which the virtuous are engaged to promote. If virtue be the ſupreme good, its beſt and moſt ſignal effect is, to communicate and diffuſe itſelf.

To love, and even to hate, on the apprehenſion of moral qualities, to eſpouſe one party from a ſenſe of juſtice, to oppoſe another with indignation excited by iniquity, are the common indications of probity, and the operations of an animated, upright, and generous ſpirit. To guard againſt unjuſt partialities, and ill-grounded antipathies; to maintain that compoſure of mind, which, without impairing its ſenſibility or ardour, proceeds in every inſtance with diſcernment and penetration, are the marks of a vigorous and cultivated ſpirit. To be able to follow the dictates of ſuch a ſpirit through all the varieties of human life, and with a mind always maſter of itſelf, in proſperity or adverſity, and poſſeſſed of all its abilities, when the ſubjects in hazard are life, or freedom, as much

* Perſian Letters.

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as in treating ſimple queſtions of intereſt, are the triumphs of magnanimity, and true elevation of mind. "The event of the day is decided. Draw this javelin "from my body now," ſaid Epaminondas, "and let me "bleed."

In what ſituation, or by what inſtruction, is this wonderful character to be formed? Is it found in the nurſeries of affectation, pertneſs, and vanity, from which faſhion is propagated, and the genteel is announced? in great and opulent cities, where men vie with one another in equipage, dreſs, and the reputation of fortune? Is it within the admired precincts of a court, where we may learn to ſmile without being pleaſed, to careſs without affection, to wound with the ſecret weapons of envy and jealouſy, and to reſt our perſonal importance on circumſtances which we cannot always with honour command? No: but in a ſituation where the great ſentiments of the heart are awakened; where the characters of men, not their ſituations and fortunes, are the principal diſtinction; where the anxieties of intereſt, or vanity, periſh in the blaze of more vigorous emotions; and where the human ſoul, having felt and recogniſed its objects, like an animal who has taſted the blood of his prey, cannot deſcend to purſuits that leave its talents and its force unemployed.

Proper occaſions alone operating on a raiſed and a happy diſpoſition, may produce this admirable effect, whilſt mere inſtruction may always find mankind at a

loſs to comprehend its meaning, or inſenſible to its dictates. The caſe, however, is not deſperate, till we have formed our ſyſtem of politics, as well as manners; till we have ſold our freedom for titles, equipage, and diſtinctions; till we ſee no merit but proſperity and power, no diſgrace but poverty and neglect. What charm of inſtruction can cure the mind that is tainted with this diſorder? What ſyren voice can awaken a deſire of freedom, that is held to be meanneſs, and a want of ambition? or what perſuaſion can turn the grimace of politeneſs into real ſentiments of humanity and candour?

SECT. VII.

Of Happineſs.

HAVING had under our conſideration the active powers and the moral qualities which diſtinguiſh the nature of man, is it ſtill neceſſary that we ſhould treat of his happineſs apart? This ſignificant term, the moſt frequent, and the moſt familiar, in our converſation, is, perhaps, on reflection, the leaſt underſtood. It ſerves to expreſs our ſatisfaction, when any deſire is gratified: It is pronounced with a ſigh, when our object is diſtant: It means what we wiſh to obtain, and what we ſeldom ſtay to examine. We eſtimate the value of every ſubject by its utility, and its influence on happineſs; but we

we think that utility itſelf, and happineſs, require no explanation.

THOSE men are commonly eſteemed the happieſt, whoſe deſires are moſt frequently gratified. But if, in reality, the poſſeſſion of what we deſire, and a continued fruition, were requiſite to happineſs, mankind for the moſt part would have reaſon to complain of their lot. What they call their enjoyments, are generally momentary; and the object of ſanguine expectation, when obtained, no longer continues to occupy the mind: A new paſſion ſucceeds, and the imagination, as before, is intent on a diſtant felicity.

How many reflections of this ſort are ſuggeſted by melancholy, or by the effects of that very languor and inoccupation into which we would willingly ſink, under the notion of freedom from care and trouble?

WHEN we enter on a formal computation of the enjoyments or ſufferings which are prepared for mankind, it is a chance but we find that pain, by its intenſeneſs, its duration, or frequency, is greatly predominant. The activity and eagerneſs with which we preſs from one ſtage of life to another, our unwillingneſs to return on the paths we have trod, our averſion in age to renew the frolics of youth, or to repeat in manhood the amuſements of children, have been accordingly ſtated as proofs, that

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our memory of the paſt, and our feeling of the preſent, are equal ſubjects of diſlike and diſpleaſure *.

This concluſion, however, like many others, drawn from our ſuppoſed knowledge of cauſes, does not correſpond with experience. In every ſtreet, in every village, in every field, the greater number of perſons we meet, carry an aſpect that is chearful or thoughleſs, indifferent, compoſed, buſy, or animated. The labourer whiſtles to his team, and the mechanic is at eaſe in his calling; the frolicſome and the gay feel a ſeries of pleaſures, of which we know not the ſource; even they who demonſtrate the miſeries of human life, when intent on their argument, eſcape from their ſorrows, and find a tolerable paſtime in proving that men are unhappy.

The very terms *pleaſure* and *pain*, perhaps, are equivocal; but if they are confined, as they appear to be in many of our reaſonings, to the mere ſenſations which have a reference to external objects, either in the memory of the paſt, the feeling of the preſent, or the apprehenſion of the future, it is a great error to ſuppoſe, that they comprehend all the conſtituents of happineſs or miſery; or that the good humour of an ordinary life is maintained by the prevalence of thoſe pleaſures which have their ſeparate names, and are, on reflection, diſtinctly remembered.

* Maupertuis; Eſſai de Morale.

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THE mind, during the greater part of its exiſtence, is employed in active exertions, not in merely attending to its own feelings of pleaſure or pain; and the liſt of its faculties, underſtanding, memory, foreſight, ſentiment, will, and intention, only contains the names of its different operations.

IF, in the abſence of every ſenſation to which we commonly give the names either of *enjoyment* or *ſuffering*, our very exiſtence may have its oppoſite qualities of *happineſs* or *miſery*; and if what we call *pleaſure* or *pain*, occupies but a ſmall part of human life, compared to what paſſes in contrivance and execution, in purſuits and expectations, in conduct, reflection, and ſocial engagements; it muſt appear, that our active purſuits, at leaſt on account of their duration, deſerve the greater part of our attention. When their occaſions have failed, the demand is not for pleaſure, but for ſomething to do; and the very complaints of a ſufferer are not ſo ſure a mark of diſtreſs, as the ſtare of the languid.

WE ſeldom, however, reckon any taſk which we are bound to perform, among the bleſſings of life. We always aim at a period of pure enjoyment, or a termination of trouble; and overlook the ſource from which moſt of our preſent ſatisfactions are really drawn. Aſk the buſy, Where is the happineſs to which they aſpire? they will anſwer, perhaps, That it is to be found in the object of ſome preſent purſuit. If we aſk, Why they are not miſerable in the abſence of that happineſs? they will ſay, That they

they hope to attain it. But is it hope alone that ſupports the mind in the midſt of precarious and uncertain proſpects? and would aſſurance of ſucceſs fill the intervals of expectation with more pleaſing emotions? Give the huntſman his prey, give the gameſter the gold which is ſtaked on the game, that the one may not need to fatigue his perſon, nor the other to perplex his mind, and both will probably laugh at our folly: the one will ſtake his money anew, that he may be perplexed; the other will turn his ſtag to the field, that he may hear the cry of the dogs, and follow through danger and hardſhip. Withdraw the occupations of men, terminate their deſires, exiſtence is a burden, and the iteration of memory is a torment.

The men of this country, ſays one lady, ſhould learn to ſow and to knit; it would hinder their time from being a burden to themſelves, and to other people. That is true, ſays another; for my part, though I never look abroad, I tremble at the proſpect of bad weather; for then the gentlemen come mopping to us for entertainment; and the ſight of a huſband in diſtreſs, is but a melancholy ſpectacle.

In deviſing, or in executing a plan, in being carried on the tide of emotion and ſentiment, the mind ſeems to unfold its being, and to enjoy itſelf. Even where the end and the object are known to be of little avail, the talents and the fancy are often intenſely applied, and buſineſs or play may amuſe them alike. We only deſire repoſe

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to recruit our limited and our waſting force: when buſineſs fatigues, amuſement is often but a change of occupation. We are not always unhappy, even when we complain. There is a kind of affliction which makes an agreeable ſtate of the mind; and lamentation itſelf is ſometimes an expreſſion of pleaſure. The painter and the poet have laid hold of this handle, and find, among the means of entertainment, a favourable reception for works that are compoſed to awaken our ſorrows.

To a being of this deſcription, therefore, it is a bleſſing to meet with incentives to action, whether in the deſire of pleaſure, or the averſion to pain. His activity is of more importance than the very pleaſure he ſeeks, and langour a greater evil than the ſuffering he ſhuns.

The gratifications of animal appetite are of ſhort duration; and ſenſuality is but a diſtemper of the mind, which ought to be cured by remembrance, if it were not perpetually inflamed by hope. The chace is not more ſurely terminated by the death of the game, than the joys of the voluptuary by the means of completing his debauch. As a bond of ſociety, as a matter of diſtant purſuit, the objects of ſenſe make an important part in the ſyſtem of human life. They lead us to fulfil the purpoſe of nature, in preſerving the individual, and in perpetuating the ſpecies: but to rely on their uſe as a principal conſtituent of human felicity, were an error in ſpeculation, and would be ſtill more an error in practice. Even the maſter of the ſera-

glio, for whom all the treaſures of empire are extorted from the hoards of its frighted inhabitants, for whom alone the choiceſt emerald and the diamond are drawn from the mine, for whom every breeze is enriched with perfumes, for whom beauty is aſſembled from every quarter, and, animated by paſſions that ripen under the vertical ſun, is confined to the grate for his uſe, is ſtill, perhaps, more wretched than the very herd of the people, whoſe labours and properties are devoted to relieve him of trouble, and to procure him enjoyment.

SENSUALITY is eaſily overcome by any of the habits of purſuit which uſually engage an active mind. When curioſity is awake, or when paſſion is excited, even in the midſt of the feaſt when converſation grows warm, grows jovial, or ſerious, the pleaſures of the table we know are forgotten. The boy contemns them for play, and the man of age declines them for buſineſs.

WHEN we reckon the circumſtances that correſpond to the nature of any animal, or to that of man in particular, ſuch as ſafety, ſhelter, food, and the other means of enjoyment or preſervation, we ſometimes think that we have found a ſenſible and a ſolid foundation on which to reſt his felicity. But thoſe who are leaſt diſpoſed to moralize, obſerve, that happineſs is not connected with fortune, although fortune includes at once all the means of ſubſiſtence, and the means of ſenſual indulgence. The circumſtances that require abſtinence, courage,

rage, and conduct, expoſe us to hazard, and are in deſcription of the painful kind; yet the able, the brave, and the ardent, ſeem moſt to enjoy themſelves when placed in the midſt of difficulties, and obliged to employ the powers they poſſeſs.

SPINOLA being told, that Sir Francis Vere died of having nothing to do, ſaid, "That was enough "to kill a general.*" How many are there to whom war itſelf is a paſtime, who chuſe the life of a ſoldier, expoſed to dangers and continued fatigues; of a mariner, in conflict with every hardſhip, and bereft of every conveniency; of a politician, whoſe ſport is the conduct of parties and factions; and who, rather than be idle, will do the buſineſs of men and of nations for whom he has not the ſmalleſt regard. Such men do not chuſe pain as preferable to pleaſure, but they are incited by a reſtleſs diſpoſition to make continued exertions of capacity and reſolution; they triumph in the midſt of their ſtruggles; they droop, and they languiſh, when the occaſion of their labour has ceaſed.

WHAT was enjoyment, in the ſenſe of that youth, who, according to Tacitus, loved danger itſelf, not the rewards of courage? What is the proſpect of pleaſure, when the ſound of the horn or the trumpet, the cry of the dogs, or the ſhout of war, awaken the ardour of the ſportſman and the ſoldier? The moſt animating occa-

* Life of Lord Herbert.

ſions of human life, are calls to danger and hardſhip, not invitations to ſafety and eaſe: and man himſelf, in his excellence, is not an animal of pleaſure, nor deſtined merely to enjoy what the elements bring to his uſe; but, like his aſſociates, the dog and the horſe, to follow the exerciſes of his nature, in preference to what are called its enjoyments; to pine in the lap of eaſe and of affluence, and to exult in the midſt of alarms that ſeem to threaten his being. In all which, his diſpoſition to action only keeps pace with the variety of powers with which he is furniſhed; and the moſt reſpectable attributes of his nature, magnanimity, fortitude, and wiſdom, carry a manifeſt reference to the difficulties with which he is deſtined to ſtruggle.

If animal pleaſure becomes inſipid when the ſpirit is rouſed by a different object, it is well known likewiſe, that the ſenſe of pain is prevented by any vehement affection of the ſoul. Wounds received in a heat of paſſion, in the hurry, the ardour, or conſternation of battle, are never felt till the ferment of the mind ſubſides. Even torment, deliberately applied, and induſtriouſly prolonged, are borne with firmneſs, and with an appearance of eaſe, when the mind is poſſeſſed with ſome vigorous ſentiment, whether of religion, enthuſiaſm, or love to mankind. The continued mortifications of ſuperſtitious devotees in ſeveral ages of the Chriſtian church; the wild penances, ſtill voluntarily borne, during many years, by the religioniſts of the eaſt; the contempt in which famine and torture are held by moſt ſavage nations; the chear-

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ful or obſtinate patience of the ſoldier in the field; the hardſhips endured by the ſportſman in his paſtime, ſhow how much we may err in computing the miſeries of men, from the meaſures of trouble and of ſuffering they ſeem to incur. And if there be a refinement in affirming, that their happineſs is not to be meaſured by the contrary enjoyments, it is a refinement which was made by Regulus and Cincinnatus before the date of philoſophy; it is a refinement, which every boy knows at his play, and every ſavage confirms, when he looks from his foreſt on the pacific city, and ſcorns the plantation, whoſe maſter he cares not to imitate.

MAN, it muſt be confeſſed, notwithſtanding all this activity of his mind, is an animal in the full extent of that deſignation. When the body ſickens, the mind droops; and when the blood ceaſes to flow, the ſoul takes its departure. Charged with the care of his preſervation, admoniſhed by a ſenſe of pleaſure or pain, and guarded by an inſtinctive fear of death, nature has not intruſted his ſafety to the mere vigilance of his underſtanding, nor to the government of his uncertain reflections.

THE diſtinction betwixt mind and body is followed by conſequences of the greateſt importance; but the facts to which we now refer, are not founded on any tenets whatever. They are equally true, whether we admit or reject the diſtinction in queſtion, or whether we ſuppoſe, that this living agent is formed of one, or is an aſſemblage of ſeparate natures. And the materialiſt, by treating

treating of man as of an engine, cannot make any change in the ſtate of his hiſtory. He is a being, who, by a multiplicity of viſible organs, performs a variety of functions. His joints are bent, and his muſcles relax and contract in our ſight; the heart beats in his breaſt, and the blood flows to every part of his frame. He performs other operations which we cannot refer to any coporeal organ. He perceives, he recollects, and forecaſts; he deſires, and he ſhuns; he admires, and contemns. He enjoys his pleaſures, or he endures his pain. All theſe different functions, in ſome meaſure, go well or ill together. When the motion of the blood is languid, the muſcles relax, the underſtanding is tardy, and the fancy is dull: when diſtemper aſſails him, the phyſician muſt attend no leſs to what he thinks, than to what he eats, and examine the returns of his paſſion, together with the ſtrokes of his pulſe.

With all his ſagacity, his precautions, and his inſtincts, which are given to preſerve his being, he partakes in the fate of other animals, and ſeems to be formed only that he may die. Myriads periſh before they reach the perfection of their kind; and the individual, with an option to owe the prolongation of his temporary courſe to reſolution and conduct, or to abject fear, frequently chuſes the latter, and by a habit of timidity, imbitters the life he is ſo intent to preſerve.

Man, however, at times, exempted from this mortifying lot, ſeems to act without any regard to the length of

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his period. When he thinks intenſely, or deſires with ardour, pleaſures and pains from any other quarter aſſail him in vain. Even in his dying hour, the muſcles acquire a tone from his ſpirit, and the mind ſeems to depart in its vigour, and in the midſt of a ſtruggle to obtain the recent aim of its toils. Muley Moluck, borne on his litter, and ſpent with diſeaſe, ſtill fought the battle, in the midſt of which he expired; and the laſt effort he made, with a finger on his lips, was a ſignal to conceal his death: the precaution, perhaps, of all which he had hitherto taken, the moſt neceſſary to prevent a defeat.

CAN no reflections aid us in acquiring this habit of the ſoul, ſo uſeful in carrying us through many of the ordinary ſcenes of life? If we ſay, that they cannot, the reality of its happineſs is not the leſs evident. The Greeks and the Romans conſidered contempt of pleaſure, endurance of pain, and neglect of life, as eminent qualities of a man, and a principal ſubject of diſcipline. They truſted, that the vigorous ſpirit would find worthy objects on which to employ its force; and that the firſt ſtep towards a reſolute choice of ſuch objects was to ſhake off the meanneſs of a ſolicitous and timorous mind.

MANKIND, in general, have courted occaſions to diſplay their courage, and frequently, in ſearch of admiration, have preſented a ſpectacle, which to thoſe who have ceaſed to regard fortitude on its own account, becomes a ſubject of horror. Scevola held his arm in the fire,

fire, to ſhake the ſoul of Porſenna. The ſavage inures his body to the torture, that in the hour of trial he may exult over his enemy. Even the Muſſulman tears his fleſh to win the heart of his miſtreſs, and comes in gaiety, ſtreaming with blood, to ſhew that he deſerves her eſteem *.

Some nations carry the practice of inflicting, or of ſporting with pain, to a degree that is either cruel or abſurd; others regard every proſpect of bodily ſuffering as the greateſt of evils; and in the midſt of their troubles, imbitter every real affliction, with the terrors of a feeble and dejected imagination. We are not bound to anſwer for the follies of either, nor, in treating a queſtion which relates to the nature of man, make an eſtimate of its ſtrength, or its weakneſs, from the habits or apprehenſions peculiar to any nation or age.

SECT. VIII.

The ſame ſubject continued.

Whoever has compared together the different conditions and manners of men, under varieties of education or fortune, will be ſatisfied, that mere ſituation does not conſtitute their happineſs or

* Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W——y M——e.

miſery;

miſery; nor a diverſity of external obſervances imply any oppoſition of ſentiments on the ſubject of morality. They expreſs their kindneſs and their enmity in different actions; but kindneſs or enmity is ſtill the principal article of conſideration in human life. They engage in different purſuits, or acquieſce in different conditions; but act from paſſions nearly the ſame. There is no preciſe meaſure of accommodation required to ſuit their conveniency, nor any degree of danger or ſafety under which they are peculiarly fitted to act. Courage and generoſity, fear and envy, are not peculiar to any ſtation or order of men; nor is there any condition in which ſome of the human race have not ſhewn, that it is poſſible to employ, with propriety, the talents and virtues of their ſpecies.

WHAT, then, is that myſterious thing called *Happineſs*, which may have place in ſuch a variety of ſtations, and to which circumſtances in one age or nation thought neceſſary, are in another held to be deſtructive, or of no effect? It is not the ſucceſſion of mere animal pleaſures, which, apart from the occupation or the company in which they ſerve to engage the mind, can fill up but a few moments in the duration of life. On too frequent a repetition, thoſe pleaſures turn to ſatiety and diſguſt; they tear the conſtitution to which they are applied in exceſs, and, like the lightning of night, only ſerve to darken the gloom through which they occaſionally break. Happineſs is not that ſtate of repoſe, or that imaginary freedom from care, which at a diſtance is ſo frequent an ob-

ject of deſire, but with its approach brings a tedium, or a languor, more unſupportable than pain itſelf. If the preceding obſervations on this ſubject be juſt, it ariſes more from the purſuit, than from the attainment of any end whatever; and in every new ſituation to which we arrive, even in the courſe of a proſperous life, it depends more on the degree in which our minds are properly employed, than it does on the circumſtances in which we are deſtined to act, on the materials which are placed in our hands, or the tools with which we are furniſhed.

If this be confeſſed in reſpect to that claſs of purſuits which are diſtinguiſhed by the name of *amuſement*, and which, in the caſe of men who are commonly deemed the moſt happy, occupy the greater part of human life, we may apprehend, that it holds, much more than is commonly ſuſpected, in many caſes of buſineſs, where the end to be gained, and not the occupation, is ſuppoſed to have the principal value.

The miſer himſelf, we are told, can ſometimes conſider the care of his wealth as a paſtime, and has challenged his heir, to have more pleaſure in ſpending, than he in amaſſing his fortune. With this degree of indifference to what may be the conduct of others; with this confinement of his care to what he has choſen as his own province, more eſpecially if he has conquered in himſelf the paſſions of jealouſy and envy, which tear the covetous mind; why may not the man whoſe object is money, be underſtood to lead a life of amuſement and pleaſure,

pleaſure, not only more entire than that of the ſpend-thrift, but even as much as the virtuoſo, the ſcholar, the man of taſte, or any of that claſs of perſons who have found out a method of paſſing their leiſure without offence, and to whom the acquiſitions made, or the works produced, in their ſeveral ways, perhaps, are as uſeleſs as the bag to the miſer, or the counter to thoſe who play from mere diſſipation at any game of ſkill or of chance?

We are ſoon tired of diverſions that do not approach to the nature of buſineſs, that is, that do not engage ſome paſſion, or give an exerciſe proportioned to our talents, and our faculties. The chace and the gaming-table have each their dangers and difficulties, to excite and employ the mind. All games of contention animate our emulation, and give a ſpecies of party-zeal. The mathematician is only to be amuſed with intricate problems, the lawyer and the caſuiſt with caſes that try their ſubtilty, and occupy their judgement.

The deſire of active engagements, like every other natural appetite, may be carried to exceſs; and men may debauch in amuſements, as well as in the uſe of wine, or other intoxicating liquors. At firſt, a trifling ſtake, and the occupation of a moderate paſſion, may have ſerved to amuſe the gameſter; but when the drug becomes familiar, it fails to produce its effect: The play is made deep, and the intereſt increaſed, to awaken his attention; he is carried on by degrees, and in the end comes to ſeek for amuſement, and to find it only in thoſe paſſions of an-

xiety, hope, and deſpair, which are rouſed by the hazard into which he has thrown the whole of his fortunes.

If men can thus turn their amuſements into a ſcene more ſerious and intereſting than that of buſineſs itſelf, it will be difficult to aſſign a reaſon, why buſineſs, and many of the occupations of human life, independent of any diſtant conſequences, or future events, may not be choſen as an amuſement, and adopted on account of the paſtime they bring. This is, perhaps, the foundation on which, without the aid of reflection, the contented and the chearful have reſted the gaiety of their tempers. It is perhaps the moſt ſolid baſis of fortitude which any reflection can lay; and happineſs itſelf is ſecured, by making a certain ſpecies of conduct our amuſement; and, by conſidering life, in the general eſtimate of its value, as well as on every particular occaſion, as a mere ſcene for the exerciſe of the mind, and the engagements of the heart. "I will try and attempt every thing," ſays Brutus, "I will never ceaſe to recal my country from "this ſtate of ſervility. If the event be favourable, it will "prove matter of joy to us all; if not, yet I, notwith-"ſtanding, ſhall rejoice." Why rejoice in a diſappointment? Why not be dejected, when his country was overwhelmed? Becauſe ſorrow, perhaps, and dejection, can do no good. Nay, but they muſt be endured when they come. And whence ſhould they come to me? might the Roman ſay; I have followed my mind, and can follow it ſtill. Events may have changed the ſituation in which I am deſtined to act; but can they hinder my acting

ing the part of a man? Shew me a ſituation in which a man can neither act nor die, and I will own he is wretched.

WHOEVER has the force of mind ſteadily to view human life under this aſpect, has only to chuſe well his occupations, in order to command that ſtate of enjoyment, and freedom of ſoul, which probably conſtitute the peculiar felicity to which his active nature is deſtined.

THE diſpoſitions of men, and conſequently their occupations, are commonly divided into two principal claſſes; the ſelfiſh, and the ſocial. The firſt are indulged in ſolitude; and if they carry a reference to mankind, it is that of emulation, competition, and enmity. The ſecond incline us to live with our fellow-creatures, and to do them good; they tend to unite the members of ſociety together; they terminate in a mutual participation of their cares and enjoyments, and render the preſence of men an occaſion of joy. Under this claſs may be enumerated the paſſions of the ſexes, the affections of parents and children, general humanity, or ſingular attachments; above all, that habit of the ſoul by which we conſider ourſelves as but a part of ſome beloved community, and as but individual members of ſome ſociety, whoſe general welfare is to us the ſupreme object of zeal, and the great rule of our conduct. This affection is a principle of candour, which knows no partial diſtinctions, and is confined to no bounds: it may extend its effects beyond our perſonal acquaintance; it may, in the

mind,

mind, and in thought, at leaſt, make us feel a relation to the univerſe, and to the whole creation of God. "Shall any one," ſays Antoninus, "love the city of "Cecrops, and you not love the city of God?"

No emotion of the heart is indifferent. It is either an act of vivacity and joy, or a feeling of ſadneſs; a tranſport of pleaſure, or a convulſion of anguiſh: and the exerciſes of our different diſpoſitions, as well as their gratifications, are likely to prove matter of the greateſt importance to our happineſs or miſery.

THE individual is charged with the care of his animal preſervation. He may exiſt in ſolitude, and, far removed from ſociety, perform many functions of ſenſe, imagination, and reaſon. He is even rewarded for the proper diſcharge of thoſe functions; and all the natural exerciſes which relate to himſelf, as well as to his fellow-creatures, not only occupy without diſtreſſing him, but in many inſtances are attended with poſitive pleaſures, and fill up the hours of life with agreeable occupation.

THERE is a degree, however, in which we ſuppoſe that the care of ourſelves becomes a ſource of painful anxiety and cruel paſſions; in which it degenerates into avarice, vanity, or pride; and in which, by foſtering habits of jealouſy and envy, of fear and malice, it becomes as deſtructive of our own enjoyments, as it is hoſtile to the welfare of mankind. This evil, however, is not to be charged

charged upon any exceſs in the care of ourſelves, but upon a mere miſtake in the choice of our objects. We look abroad for a happineſs which is to be found only in the qualities of the heart: we think ourſelves dependent on accidents; and are therefore kept in ſuſpenſe and ſolicitude: we think ourſelves dependent on the will of other men; and are therefore ſervile and timid: we think our felicity is placed in ſubjects for which our fellow-creatures are rivals and competitors; and in purſuit of happineſs, we engage in thoſe ſcenes of emulation, envy, hatred, animoſity, and revenge, that lead to the higheſt pitch of diſtreſs. We act, in ſhort, as if to preſerve ourſelves were to retain our weakneſs, and perpetuate our ſufferings. We charge the ills of a diſtempered imagination, and a corrupt heart, to the account of our fellow-creatures, to whom we refer the pangs of our diſappointment or malice; and while we foſter our miſery, are ſurpriſed that the care of ourſelves is attended with no better effects. But he who remembers that he is by nature a rational being, and a member of ſociety; that to preſerve himſelf, is to preſerve his reaſon, and to preſerve the beſt feelings of his heart; will encounter with none of theſe inconveniencies; and in the care of himſelf, will find ſubjects only of ſatisfaction and triumph.

THE diviſion of our appetites into benevolent and ſelfiſh, has probably, in ſome degree, helped to miſlead our apprehenſion on the ſubject of perſonal enjoyment and private good; and our zeal to prove that virtue is diſintereſted, has not greatly promoted its cauſe. The gratification

gratification of a ſelfiſh deſire, it is thought, brings advantage or pleaſure to ourſelves; that of benevolence terminates in the pleaſure or advantage of others: whereas, in reality, the gratification of every deſire is a perſonal enjoyment, and its value being proportioned to the particular quality or force of the ſentiment, it may happen that the ſame perſon may reap a greater advantage from the good fortune he has procured to another, than from that he has obtained for himſelf.

WHILE the gratifications of benevolence, therefore, are as much our own as thoſe of any other deſire whatever, the mere exerciſes of this diſpoſition are, on many accounts, to be conſidered as the firſt and the principal conſtituent of human happineſs. Every act of kindneſs, or of care, in the parent to his child; every emotion of the heart, in friendſhip or in love, in public zeal, or general humanity, are ſo many acts of enjoyment and ſatisfaction. Pity itſelf, and compaſſion, even grief and melancholy, when grafted on ſome tender affection, partake of the nature of the ſtock; and if they are not poſitive pleaſures, are at leaſt pains of a peculiar nature, which we do not even wiſh to exchange but for a very real enjoyment, obtained in relieving our object. Even extremes, in this claſs of our diſpoſitions, as they are the reverſe of hatred, envy, and malice, ſo they are never attended with thoſe excruciating anxieties, jealouſies, and fears, which tear the intereſted mind; or if, in reality, any ill paſſion ariſe from a pretended attachment to our fellow-creatures, that attachment may be

ſafely

ſafely condemned, as not genuine. If we be diſtruſtful or jealous, our pretended affection is probably no more than a deſire of attention and perſonal conſideration, a motive which frequently inclines us to be connected with our fellow-creatures; but to which we are as frequently willing to ſacrifice their happineſs. We conſider them as the tools of our vanity, pleaſure, or intereſt; not as the parties on whom we may beſtow the effects of our good-will, and our love.

A mind devoted to this claſs of its affections, being occupied with an object that may engage it habitually, is not reduced to court the amuſements or pleaſures with which perſons of an ill temper are obliged to repair their diſguſts: and temperance becomes an eaſy taſk when gratifications of ſenſe are ſupplanted by thoſe of the heart. Courage too is moſt eaſily aſſumed, or is rather inſeparable from that ardour of the mind, in ſociety, friendſhip, or in public action, which makes us forget ſubjects of perſonal anxiety or fear, and attend chiefly to the object of our zeal or affection, not to the trifling inconveniencies, dangers, or hardſhips, which we ourſelves may encounter in ſtriving to maintain it.

It ſhould ſeem, therefore, to be the happineſs of man, to make his ſocial diſpoſitions the ruling ſpring of his occupations; to ſtate himſelf as the member of a community, for whoſe general good his heart may glow with an ardent zeal, to the ſuppreſſion of thoſe perſonal

cares which are the foundation of painful anxieties, fear, jealouſy, and envy; or, as Mr Pope expreſſes the ſame ſentiment,

" Man, like the generous vine, ſupported lives;
" The ſtrength he gains, is from th'embrace he gives *."

If this be the good of the individual, it is likewiſe that of mankind; and virtue no longer impoſes a taſk by which we are obliged to beſtow upon others that good from which we ourſelves refrain; but ſuppoſes, in the higheſt degree, as poſſeſſed by ourſelves, that ſtate of felicity which we are required to promote in the world.

We commonly apprehend, that it is our duty to do kindneſſes, and our happineſs to receive them: but if, in reality, courage, and a heart devoted to the good of mankind, are the conſtituents of human felicity, the kindneſs which is done infers a happineſs in the perſon from whom it proceeds, not in him on whom it is beſtowed; and the greateſt good which men poſſeſſed of fortitude and generoſity can procure to their fellow-creatures, is a participation of this happy character. " You " will confer the greateſt benefit on your city," ſays Epictetus, " not by raiſing the roofs, but by exalting the " ſouls of your fellow-citizens; for it is better that great " ſouls ſhould live in ſmall habitations, than that abject " ſlaves ſhould burrow in great houſes †."

* The ſame maxim will apply throughout every part of nature. *To love, is to enjoy pleaſure: To hate, is to be in pain.*

† Mrs Carter's tranſlation of the works of Epictetus.

To

To the benevolent, the ſatisfaction of others is a ground of enjoyment; and exiſtence itſelf, in a world that is governed by the wiſdom of God, is a bleſſing. The mind, freed from cares that lead to puſillanimity and meanneſs, becomes calm, active, fearleſs, and bold; capable of every enterpriſe, and vigorous in the exerciſe of every talent, by which the nature of man is adorned. On this foundation was raiſed the admirable character, which, during a certain period of their ſtory, diſtinguiſhed the celebrated nations of antiquity, and rendered familiar and ordinary in their manners, examples of magnanimity, which, under governments leſs favourable to the public affections, rarely occur; or which, without being much practiſed, or even underſtood, are made ſubjects of admiration and ſwelling panegyric. " Thus," ſays Xenophon, " died Thraſy-" bulus; who indeed appears to have been a good man." What valuable praiſe, and how ſignificant to thoſe who know the ſtory of this admirable perſon! The members of thoſe illuſtrious ſtates, from the habit of conſidering themſelves as part of a community, or at leaſt as deeply involved with ſome order of men in the ſtate, were regardleſs of perſonal conſiderations: they had a perpetual view to objects which excite a great ardour in the ſoul; which led them to act perpetually in the view of their fellow-citizens, and to practiſe thoſe arts of deliberation, elocution, policy, and war, on which the fortunes of nations, or of men, in their collective body, depend. To the force of mind collected in this career, and to the improvements of wit which were made in

purſuing it, theſe nations owed, not only their magnanimity, and the ſuperiority of their political and military conduct, but even the arts of poetry and literature, which among them were only the inferior appendages of a genius otherwiſe excited, cultivated, and refined.

To the ancient Greek, or the Roman, the individual was nothing, and the public every thing. To the modern, in too many nations of Europe, the individual is every thing, and the public nothing. The ſtate is merely a combination of departments, in which conſideration, wealth, eminence, or power, are offered as the reward of ſervice. It was the nature of modern government, even in its firſt inſtitution, to beſtow on every individual a fixed ſtation and dignity, which he was to maintain for himſelf. Our anceſtors, in rude ages, during the receſs of wars from abroad, fought for their perſonal claims at home, and by their competitions, and the balance of their powers, maintained a kind of political freedom in the ſtate, while private parties were ſubject to continual wrongs and oppreſſions. Their poſterity, in times more poliſhed, have repreſſed the civil diſorders in which the activity of earlier ages chiefly conſiſted; but they employ the calm they have gained, not in foſtering a zeal for thoſe laws, and that conſtitution of government, to which they owe their protection, but in practiſing apart, and each for himſelf, the ſeveral arts of perſonal advancement, or profit, which their political eſtabliſhments may enable them to purſue with ſucceſs. Commerce, which

which may be ſuppoſed to comprehend every lucrative art, is accordingly conſidered as the great object of nations, and the principal ſtudy of mankind.

So much are we accuſtomed to conſider perſonal fortune as the ſole object of care, that even under popular eſtabliſhments, and in ſtates where different orders of men are ſummoned to partake in the government of their country, and where the liberties they enjoy cannot be long preſerved, without vigilance and activity on the part of the ſubject; ſtill they, who, in the vulgar phraſe, have not their fortunes to make, are ſuppoſed to be at a loſs for occupation, and betake themſelves to ſolitary paſtimes, or cultivate what they are pleaſed to call a taſte for gardening, building, drawing, or muſic. With this aid, they endeavour to fill up the blanks of a liſtleſs life, and avoid the neceſſity of curing their languors by any poſitive ſervice to their country, or to mankind.

THE weak or the malicious are well employed in any thing that is innocent, and are fortunate in finding any occupation which prevents the effects of a temper that would prey upon themſelves, or upon their fellow-creatures. But they who are bleſſed with a happy diſpoſition, with capacity and vigour, incur a real debauchery, by having any amuſement that occupies an improper ſhare of their time; and are really cheated of their happineſs, in being made to believe, that any occupation or paſtime is better fitted to amuſe themſelves,

ſelves, than that which at the ſame time produces ſome real good to their fellow-creatures.

THIS ſort of entertainment, indeed, cannot be the choice of the mercenary, the envious, or the malignant. Its value is known only to perſons of an oppoſite temper; and to their experience alone we appeal. Guided by mere diſpoſition, and without the aid of reflection, in buſineſs, in friendſhip, and in public life, they often acquit themſelves well; and borne with ſatisfaction on the tide of their emotions and ſentiments, enjoy the preſent hour, without recollection of the paſt, or hopes of the future. It is in ſpeculation, not in practice, they are made to diſcover, that virtue is a taſk of ſeverity and ſelf-denial.

SECT. IX.

Of National Felicity.

MAN is, by nature, the member of a community; and when conſidered in this capacity, the individual appears to be no longer made for himſelf. He muſt forego his happineſs and his freedom, where theſe interfere with the good of ſociety. He is only part of a whole; and the praiſe we think due to his virtue, is but a branch of that more general commendation we beſtow on the member of a body, on the part of a fabric or engine, for

for being well fitted to occupy its place, and to produce its effect.

If this follow from the relation of a part to its whole, and if the public good be the principal object with individuals, it is likewise true, that the happiness of individuals is the great end of civil society: for in what sense can a public enjoy any good, if its members, considered apart, be unhappy?

The interests of society, however, and of its members, are easily reconciled. If the individual owe every degree of consideration to the public, he receives, in paying that very consideration, the greatest happiness of which his nature is capable; and the greatest blessing that the public can bestow on its members, is to keep them attached to itself. That is the most happy state, which is most beloved by its subjects; and they are the most happy men, whose hearts are engaged to a community, in which they find every object of generosity and zeal, and a scope to the exercise of every talent, and of every virtuous disposition.

After we have thus found general maxims, the greater part of our trouble remains, their just application to particular cases. Nations are different in respect to their extent, numbers of people, and wealth; in respect to the arts they practise, and the accommodations they have procured. These circumstances may not only affect the manners of men; they even, in our esteem, come into competition

competition with the article of manners itſelf; are ſuppoſed to conſtitute a national felicity, independent of virtue; and give a title, upon which we indulge our own vanity, and that of other nations, as we do that of private men, on the ſcore of their fortunes and honours.

But if this way of meaſuring happineſs, when applied to private men, be ruinous and falſe, it is ſo no leſs when applied to nations. Wealth, commerce, extent of territory, and the knowledge of arts, are, when properly employed, the means of preſervation, and the foundations of power. If they fail in part, the nation is weakened; if they were entirely with-held, the race would periſh: their tendency is to maintain numbers of men, but not to conſtitute happineſs. They will accordingly maintain the wretched, as well as the happy. They anſwer one purpoſe, but are not therefore ſufficient for all; and are of little ſignificance, when only employed to maintain a timid, dejected, and ſervile people.

Great and powerful ſtates are able to overcome and ſubdue the weak; poliſhed and commercial nations have more wealth, and practiſe a greater variety of arts, than the rude: but the happineſs of men, in all caſes alike, conſiſts in the bleſſings of a candid, an active, and ſtrenuous mind. And if we conſider the ſtate of ſociety merely as that into which mankind are led by their propenſities, as a ſtate to be valued from its effect in preſerving the ſpecies, in ripening their talents, and exciting their virtues, we need not enlarge our communities, in order

order to enjoy these advantages. We frequently obtain them in the most remarkable degree, where nations remain independent, and are of a small extent.

To increase the numbers of mankind, may be admitted as a great and important object: but to extend the limits of any particular state, is not, perhaps, the way to obtain it; while we desire that our fellow-creatures should multiply, it does not follow, that the whole should, if possible, be united under one head. We are apt to admire the empire of the Romans, as a model of national greatness and splendour: but the greatness we admire in this case, was ruinous to the virtue and the happiness of mankind; it was found to be inconsistent with all the advantages which that conquering people had formerly enjoyed in the articles of government and manners.

The emulation of nations proceeds from their division. A cluster of states, like a company of men, find the exercise of their reason, and the test of their virtues, in the affairs they transact, upon a foot of equality, and of separate interest. The measures taken for safety, including great part of the national policy, are relative in every state to what is apprehended from abroad. Athens was necessary to Sparta, in the exercise of her virtue, as steel is to flint in the production of fire; and if the cities of Greece had been united under one head, we should never have heard of Epaminondas or Thrasybulus, of Lycurgus or Solon.

WHEN we reaſon in behalf of our ſpecies, therefore, although we may lament the abuſes which ſometimes ariſe from independence, and oppoſition of intereſt; yet, whilſt any degrees of virtue remain with mankind, we cannot wiſh to croud, under one eſtabliſhment, numbers of men who may ſerve to conſtitute ſeveral; or to commit affairs to the conduct of one ſenate, one legiſlative or executive power, which, upon a diſtinct and ſeparate footing, might furniſh an exerciſe of ability, and a theatre of glory, to many.

THIS may be a ſubject upon which no determinate rule can be given, but the admiration of boundleſs dominion is a ruinous error; and in no inſtance, perhaps, is the real intereſt of mankind more entirely miſtaken.

THE meaſure of enlargement to be wiſhed for any particular ſtate, is often to be taken from the condition of its neighbours. Where a number of ſtates are contiguous, they ſhould be near an equality, in order that they may be mutually objects of reſpect and conſideration, and in order that they may poſſeſs that independence in which the political life of a nation conſiſts.

WHEN the kingdoms of Spain were united, when the great fiefs in France were annexed to the crown, it was no longer expedient for the nations of Great Britain to continue disjoined.

THE

THE ſmall republics of Greece, indeed, by their ſubdiviſions, and the balance of their power, found almoſt in every village the object of nations. Every little diſtrict was a nurſery of excellent men, and what is now the wretched corner of a great empire, was the field on which mankind have reaped their principal honours. But in modern Europe, republics of a ſimilar extent, are like ſhrubs, under the ſhade of a taller wood, choked by the neighbourhood of more powerful ſtates. In their caſe, a certain diſproportion of force fruſtrates, in a great meaſure, the advantage of ſeparation. They are like the trader in Poland, who is the more deſpicable, and the leſs ſecure, that he is neither maſter nor ſlave.

INDEPENDENT communities, in the mean time, however weak, are averſe to a coalition, not only where it comes with an air of impoſition, or unequal treaty, but even where it implies no more than the admiſſion of new members to an equal ſhare of conſideration with the old. The citizen has no intereſt in the annexation of kingdoms; he muſt find his importance diminiſhed, as the ſtate is enlarged: but ambitious men, under the enlargement of territory, find a more plentiful harveſt of power, and of wealth, while government itſelf is an eaſier taſk. Hence the ruinous progreſs of empire; and hence free nations, under the ſhew of acquiring dominion, ſuffer themſelves, in the end, to be yoked with the ſlaves they had conquered.

OUR desire to augment the force of a nation is the only pretext for enlarging its territory; but this measure, when pursued to extremes, seldom fails to frustrate itself.

NOTWITHSTANDING the advantage of numbers, and superior resources in war, the strength of a nation is derived from the character, not from the wealth, nor from the multitude of its people. If the treasure of a state can hire numbers of men, erect ramparts, and furnish the implements of war; the possessions of the fearful are easily seized; a timorous multitude falls into rout of itself; ramparts may be scaled where they are not defended by valour; and arms are of consequence only in the hands of the brave. The band to which Agesilaus pointed as the wall of his city, made a defence for their country more permanent, and more effectual, than the rock and the cement with which other cities were fortified.

WE should owe little to that statesman who were to contrive a defence that might supersede the external uses of virtue. It is wisely ordered for man, as a rational being, that the employment of reason is necessary to his preservation: it is fortunate for him, in the pursuit of distinction, that his personal consideration depends on his character; and it is fortunate for nations, that, in order to be powerful and safe, they must strive to maintain the courage, and cultivate the virtues, of their people. By the use of such means, they at once gain their external ends, and are happy.

PEACE

PEACE and unanimity are commonly conſidered as the principal foundations of public felicity; yet the rivalſhip of ſeparate communities, and the agitations of a free people, are the principles of political life, and the ſchool of men. How ſhall we reconcile theſe jarring and oppoſite tenets? It is, perhaps, not neceſſary to reconcile them. The pacific may do what they can to allay the animoſities, and to reconcile the opinions, of men; and it will be happy if they can ſucceed in repreſſing their crimes, and in calming the worſt of their paſſions. Nothing, in the mean time, but corruption or ſlavery can ſuppreſs the debates that ſubſiſt among men of integrity, who bear an equal part in the adminiſtration of ſtate.

A perfect agreement in matters of opinion is not to be obtained in the moſt ſelect company; and if it were, what would become of ſociety? "The Spartan legiſ-" lator," ſays Plutarch, "appears to have ſown the ſeeds " of variance and diſſenſion among his countrymen: " he meant that good citizens ſhould be led to diſpute; " he conſidered emulation as the brand by which their " virtues were kindled; and ſeemed to apprehend, that " a complaiſance, by which men ſubmit their opinions " without examination, is a principal ſource of corrup-" tion."

FORMS of government are ſuppoſed to decide of the happineſs or miſery of mankind. But forms of government muſt be varied, in order to ſuit the extent, the

the way of ſubſiſtence, the character, and the manners of different nations. In ſome caſes, the multitude may be ſuffered to govern themſelves; in others, they muſt be ſeverely reſtrained. The inhabitants of a village in ſome primitive age, may have been ſafely intruſted to the conduct of reaſon, and to the ſuggeſtion of their innocent views; but the tenants of Newgate can ſcarcely be truſted, with chains locked to their bodies, and bars of iron fixed to their legs. How is it poſſible, therefore, to find any ſingle form of government that would ſuit mankind in every condition?

We proceed, however, in the following ſection, to point out the diſtinctions, and to explain the language which occurs in this place, on the head of different models for ſubordination and government.

SECT. X.

The ſame ſubject continued.

IT is a common obſervation, That mankind were originally equal. They have indeed by nature equal rights to their preſervation, and to the uſe of their talents; but they are fitted for different ſtations; and when they are claſſed by a rule taken from this circumſtance, they ſuffer no injuſtice on the ſide of their natural rights. It is obvious, that ſome mode of ſubordination

dination is as neceſſary to men as ſociety itſelf; and this, not only to attain the ends of government, but to comply with an order eſtabliſhed by nature.

PRIOR to any political inſtitution whatever, men are qualified by a great diverſity of talents, by a different tone of the ſoul, and ardour of the paſſions, to act a variety of parts. Bring them together, each will find his place. They cenſure or applaud in a body; they conſult and deliberate in more ſelect parties; they take or give an aſcendant as individuals; and numbers are by this means fitted to act in company, and to preſerve their communities, before any formal diſtribution of office is made.

WE are formed to act in this manner; and if we have any doubts with relation to the rights of government in general, we owe our perplexity more to the ſubtilties of the ſpeculative, than to any uncertainty in the feelings of the heart. Involved in the reſolutions of our company, we move with the croud before we have determined the rule by which its will is collected. We follow a leader, before we have ſettled the ground of his pretenſions, or adjuſted the form of his election: and it is not till after mankind have committed many errors in the capacities of magiſtrate and ſubject, that they think of making government itſelf a ſubject of rules.

IF therefore, in conſidering the variety of forms under which ſocieties ſubſiſt, the caſuiſt is pleaſed to inquire,

quire, What title one man, or any number of men, have to controul his actions? he may be anſwered, None at all, provided that his actions have no effect to the prejudice of his fellow-creatures; but if they have, the rights of defence, and the obligation to repreſs the commiſſion of wrongs, belong to collective bodies, as well as to individuals. Many rude nations, having no formal tribunals for the judgement of crimes, aſſemble, when alarmed by any flagrant offence, and take their meaſures with the criminal as they would with an enemy.

But will this conſideration, which confirms the title to ſovereignty, where it is exerciſed by the ſociety in its collective capacity, or by thoſe to whom the powers of the whole are committed, likewiſe ſupport the claim to dominion, where-ever it is caſually lodged, or even where it is only maintained by force?

This queſtion may be ſufficiently anſwered, by obſerving, that a right to do juſtice, and to do good, is competent to every individual, or order of men; and that the exerciſe of this right has no limits but in the defect of power. But a right to do wrong, and commit injuſtice, is an abuſe of language, and a contradiction in terms. It is no more competent to the collective body of a people, than it is to any ſingle uſurper. When we admit ſuch a prerogative in the caſe of any ſovereign, we can only mean to expreſs the extent of his power, and the force with which he is enabled to execute his pleaſure. Such a prerogative is aſſumed by the leader of

of banditti at the head of his gang, or by a deſpotic prince at the head of his troops. When the ſword is preſented by either, the traveller or the inhabitant may ſubmit from a ſenſe of neceſſity or fear; but he lies under no obligation from a motive of duty or juſtice.

THE multiplicity of forms, in the mean time, which different ſocieties offer to our view, is almoſt infinite. The claſſes into which they diſtribute their members, the manner in which they eſtabliſh the legiſlative and executive powers, the imperceptible circumſtances by which they are led to have different cuſtoms, and to confer on their governors unequal meaſures of power and authority, give riſe to perpetual diſtinctions between conſtitutions the moſt nearly reſembling one another, and give to human affairs a variety in detail, which, in its full extent, no underſtanding can comprehend, and no memory retain.

IN order to have a general and comprehenſive knowledge of the whole, we muſt be determined on this, as on every other ſubject, to overlook many particulars and ſingularities, diſtinguiſhing different governments; to fix our attention on certain points, in which many agree; and thereby eſtabliſh a few general heads, under which the ſubject may be diſtinctly conſidered. When we have marked the characteriſtics which form the general points of coincidence; when we have purſued them to their conſequences in the ſeveral modes of le-

giſlation, execution, and judicature, in the eſtabliſhments which relate to police, commerce, religion, or domeſtic life; we have made an acquiſition of knowledge, which, though it does not ſuperſede the neceſſity of experience, may ſerve to direct our inquiries, and, in the midſt of affairs, to give an order and a method for the arrangement of particulars that occur to our obſervation.

When I recollect what the Preſident Monteſquieu has written, I am at a loſs to tell, why I ſhould treat of human affairs: but I too am inſtigated by my reflections, and my ſentiments; and I may utter them more to the comprehenſion of ordinary capacities, becauſe I am more on the level of ordinary men. If it be neceſſary to pave the way for what follows on the general hiſtory of nations, by giving ſome account of the heads under which various forms of government may be conveniently ranged, the reader ſhould perhaps be referred to what has been already delivered on the ſubject by this profound politician and amiable moraliſt. In his writings will be found, not only the original of what I am now, for the ſake of order, to copy from him, but likewiſe probably the ſource of many obſervations, which, in different places, I may, under the belief of invention, have repeated, without quoting their author.

The ancient philoſophers treated of government commonly under three heads; the Democratic, the Ariſtocratic,

cratic, and the Deſpotic. Their attention was chiefly occupied with the varieties of republican government; and they paid little regard to a very important diſtinction, which Mr Monteſquieu has made, between deſpotiſm and monarchy. He too has conſidered government as reducible to three general forms; and, " to " underſtand the nature of each," he obſerves, " it is " ſufficient to recal ideas which are familiar with men " of the leaſt reflection, who admit three definitions, " or rather three facts: That a republic is a ſtate in " which the people in a collective body, or a part of the " people, poſſeſs the ſovereign power: That monarchy " is that in which one man governs, according to fixed " and determinate laws: And a deſpotiſm is that in " which one man, without law, or rule of adminiſtra- " tion, by the mere impulſe of will or caprice, decides, " and carries every thing before him."

Republics admit of a very material diſtinction, which is pointed out in the general definition; that between democracy and ariſtocracy. In the firſt, ſupreme power remains in the hands of the collective body. Every office of magiſtracy, at the nomination of this ſovereign, is open to every citizen; who, in the diſcharge of his duty, becomes the miniſter of the people, and accountable to them for every object of his truſt.

In the ſecond, the ſovereignty is lodged in a particular claſs, or order of men; who, being once named, continue for life; or by the hereditary diſtinctions of birth

and fortune, are advanced to a ſtation of permanent ſuperiority. From this order, and by their nomination, all the offices of magiſtracy are filled; and in the different aſſemblies which they conſtitute, whatever relates to the legiſlation, the execution, or juriſdiction, is finally determined.

Mr Monteſquieu has pointed out the ſentiments or maxims from which men muſt be ſuppoſed to act under theſe different governments.

In democracy, they muſt love equality; they muſt reſpect the rights of their fellow-citizens; they muſt unite by the common ties of affection to the ſtate. In forming perſonal pretenſions, they muſt be ſatisfied with that degree of conſideration they can procure by their abilities fairly meaſured with thoſe of an opponent; they muſt labour for the public without hope of profit; they muſt reject every attempt to create a perſonal dependence. Candour, force, and elevation of mind, in ſhort, are the props of democracy; and virtue is the principle of conduct required to its preſervation.

How beautiful a pre-eminence on the ſide of popular government! and how ardently ſhould mankind wiſh for the form, if it tended to eſtabliſh the principle, or were, in every inſtance, a ſure indication of its preſence!

But

But perhaps we must have possessed the principle, in order, with any hopes of advantage, to receive the form; and where the first is entirely extinguished, the other may be fraught with evil, if any additional evil deserves to be shunned where men are already unhappy.

At Constantinople or Algiers, it is a miserable spectacle when men pretend to act on a foot of equality: they only mean to shake off the restraints of government, and to seize as much as they can of that spoil, which, in ordinary times, is ingrossed by the master they serve.

It is one advantage of democracy, that the principal ground of distinction being personal qualities, men are classed according to their abilities, and to the merit of their actions. Though all have equal pretensions to power, yet the state is actually governed by a few. The majority of the people, even in their capacity of sovereign, only pretend to employ their senses; to feel, when pressed by national inconveniencies, or threatened by public dangers; and with the ardour which is apt to arise in crouded assemblies, to urge the pursuits in which they are engaged, or to repel the attacks with which they are menaced.

The most perfect equality of rights can never exclude the ascendant of superior minds, nor the assemblies of a collective body govern without the direction of se-

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lect councils. On this account, popular government may be confounded with ariſtocracy. But this alone does not conſtitute the character of ariſtocratical government. Here the members of the ſtate are divided, at leaſt, into two claſſes; of which one is deſtined to command, the other to obey. No merits or defects can raiſe or ſink a perſon from one claſs to the other. The only effect of perſonal character is, to procure the individual a ſuitable degree of conſideration with his own order, not to vary his rank. In one ſituation he is taught to aſſume, in another to yield the pre-eminence. He occupies the ſtation of patron or client, and is either the ſovereign or the ſubject of his country. The whole citizens may unite in executing the plans of ſtate, but never in deliberating on its meaſures, or enacting its laws. What belongs to the whole people under democracy, is here confined to a part. Members of the ſuperior order, are among themſelves, poſſibly, claſſed according to their abilities, but retain a perpetual aſcendant over thoſe of inferior ſtation. They are at once the ſervants and the maſters of the ſtate, and pay with their perſonal attendance and their blood for the civil or military honours they enjoy.

To maintain for himſelf, and to admit in his fellow-citizen, a perfect equality of privilege and ſtation, is no longer the leading maxim of the member of ſuch a community. The rights of men are modified by their condition. One order claims more than it is willing to yield; the

the other must be ready to yield what it does not assume to itself: and it is with good reason that Mr Montesquieu gives to the principle of such governments the name of *moderation*, not of *virtue*.

THE elevation of one class is a moderated arrogance; the submission of the other a limited deference. The first must be careful, by concealing the invidious part of their distinction, to palliate what is grievous in the public arrangement, and by their education, their cultivated manners, and improved talents, to appear qualified for the stations they occupy. The other must be taught to yield, from respect and personal attachment, what could not otherwise be extorted by force. When this moderation fails on either side, the constitution totters. A populace enraged to mutiny, may claim the right of equality to which they are admitted in democratical states; or a nobility bent on dominion, may chuse among themselves, or find already pointed out to them, a sovereign, who, by advantages of fortune, popularity, or abilities, is ready to seize for his own family, that envied power, which has already carried his order beyond the limits of moderation, and infected particular men with a boundless ambition.

MONARCHIES have accordingly been found with the recent marks of aristocracy. There, however, the monarch is only the first among the nobles; he must be satisfied with a limited power; his subjects are ranged into classes; he finds on every quarter a pretence to privilege,

lege, that circumſcribes his authority; and he finds a force ſufficient to confine his adminiſtration within certain bounds of equity, and determinate laws.

UNDER ſuch governments, however, the love of equality is prepoſterous, and moderation itſelf is unneceſſary. The object of every rank is precedency, and every order may diſplay its advantages to their full extent. The ſovereign himſelf owes great part of his authority to the ſounding titles and the dazzling equipage which he exhibits in public. The ſubordinate ranks lay claim to importance by a like exhibition, and for that purpoſe carry in every inſtant the enſigns of their birth, or the ornaments of their fortune. What elſe could mark out to the individual the relation in which he ſtands to his fellow-ſubjects, or diſtinguiſh the numberleſs ranks that fill up the interval between the ſtate of the ſovereign and that of the peaſant? Or what elſe could, in ſtates of a great extent, preſerve any appearance of order, among members diſunited by ambition and intereſt, and deſtined to form a community, without the ſenſe of any common concern?

MONARCHIES are generally found, where the ſtate is enlarged in population and in territory, beyond the numbers and dimenſions that are conſiſtent with republican government. Together with theſe circumſtances, great inequalities ariſe in the diſtribution of property; and the deſire of pre-eminence becomes the predominant paſſion. Every rank would exerciſe its prerogative, and the ſovereign

reign is perpetually tempted to enlarge his own; if ſubjects, who deſpair of precedence, plead for equality, he is willing to favour their claims, and to aid them in procuring what muſt weaken a force, with which he himſelf is, on many occaſions, obliged to contend. In the event of ſuch a policy, many invidious diſtinctions and grievances peculiar to monarchical government, may, in appearance, be removed; but the ſtate of equality to which the ſubjects approach, is that of ſlaves, equally dependent on the will of a maſter, not that of freemen in a condition to maintain their own.

THE principle of monarchy, according to Monteſquieu, is honour. Men may poſſeſs good qualities, elevation of mind, and fortitude; but the ſenſe of equality, that will bear no incroachment on the perſonal rights of the meaneſt citizen; the indignant ſpirit, that will not court a protection, nor accept as a favour, what is due as a right; the public affection, which is founded on the neglect of perſonal conſiderations, are neither conſiſtent with the preſervation of the conſtitution, nor agreeable to the habits acquired in any ſtation aſſigned to its members.

EVERY condition is poſſeſſed of peculiar dignity, and points out a propriety of conduct, which men of ſtation are obliged to maintain. In the commerce of ſuperiors and inferiors, it is the object of ambition, and of vanity, to refine on the advantages of rank; while, to facili-

tate the intercourſe of polite ſociety, it is the aim of good breeding, to diſguiſe or reject them.

THOUGH the objects of conſideration are rather the dignities of ſtation than perſonal qualities; though friendſhip cannot be formed by mere inclination, nor alliances by the mere choice of the heart; yet men ſo united, and even without changing their order, are highly ſuſceptible of moral excellence, or liable to many different degrees of corruption. They may act a vigorous part as members of the ſtate, an amiable one in the commerce of private ſociety; or they may yield up their dignity as citizens, even while they raiſe their arrogance and preſumption as private parties.

IN monarchy, all orders of men derive their honours from the crown; but they continue to hold them as a right, and they exerciſe a ſubordinate power in the ſtate, founded on the permanent rank they enjoy, and on the attachment of thoſe whom they are appointed to lead and protect. Though they do not force themſelves into national councils, and public aſſemblies, and though the name of ſenate is unknown; yet the ſentiments they adopt muſt have weight with the ſovereign; and every individual, in his ſeparate capacity, in ſome meaſure, deliberates for his country. In whatever does not derogate from his rank, he has an arm ready to ſerve the community; in whatever alarms his ſenſe of honour, he has averſions and diſlikes, which amount to a negative on the will of his prince.

INTANGLED

INTANGLED together by the reciprocal ties of dependence and protection, though not combined by the ſenſe of a common intereſt, the ſubjects of monarchy, like thoſe of republics, find themſelves occupied as the members of an active ſociety, and engaged to treat with their fellow-creatures on a liberal footing. If thoſe principles of honour which ſave the individual from ſervility in his own perſon, or from becoming an engine of oppreſſion in the hands of another, ſhould fail; if they ſhould give way to the maxims of commerce, to the refinements of a ſuppoſed philoſophy, or to the miſplaced ardours of a republican ſpirit; if they are betrayed by the cowardice of ſubjects, or ſubdued by the ambition of princes; what muſt become of the nations of Europe?

DESPOTISM is monarchy corrupted, in which a court and a prince in appearance remain, but in which every ſubordinate rank is deſtroyed; in which the ſubject is told, that he has no rights; that he cannot poſſeſs any property, nor fill any ſtation, independent of the momentary will of his prince. Theſe doctrines are founded on the maxims of conqueſt; they muſt be inculcated with the whip and the ſword; and are beſt received under the terror of chains and impriſonment. Fear, therefore, is the principle which qualifies the ſubject to occupy his ſtation: and the ſovereign, who holds out the enſigns of terror ſo freely to others, has abundant reaſon to give this paſſion a principal place with himſelf. That tenure which he has deviſed for the rights of others, is ſoon applied to his own; and from his eager deſire to ſecure, or to extend,

his power, he finds it become, like the fortunes of his people, a creature of mere imagination and unſettled caprice.

WHILST we thus, with ſo much accuracy, can aſſign the ideal limits that may diſtinguiſh conſtitutions of government, we find them, in reality, both in reſpect to the principle and the form, variouſly blended together. In what ſociety are not men claſſed by external diſtinctions, as well as perſonal qualities? In what ſtate are they not actuated by a variety of principles; juſtice, honour, moderation, and fear? It is the purpoſe of ſcience, not to diſguiſe this confuſion in its object, but, in the multiplicity and combination of particulars, to find the principal points which deſerve our attention, and which, being well underſtood, ſave us from the embarraſſment which the varieties of ſingular caſes might otherwiſe create. In the ſame degree in which governments require men to act from principles of virtue, of honour, or of fear, they are more or leſs fully compriſed under the heads of republic, monarchy, or deſpotiſm, and the general theory is more or leſs applicable to their particular caſe.

FORMS of government, in fact, mutually approach or recede by many, and often inſenſible gradations. Democracy, by admitting certain inequalities of rank, approaches to ariſtocracy. In popular, as well as ariſtocratical governments, particular men, by their perſonal authority, and ſometimes by the credit of their family,

ly, have maintained a ſpecies of monarchical power. The monarch is limited in different degrees: even the deſpotic prince is only that monarch whoſe ſubjects claim the feweſt privileges, or who is himſelf beſt prepared to ſubdue them by force. All theſe varieties are but ſteps in the hiſtory of mankind, and mark the fleeting and tranſient ſituations through which they have paſſed, while ſupported by virtue, or depreſſed by vice.

PERFECT democracy and deſpotiſm appear to be the oppoſite extremes to which conſtitutions of government are ſometimes carried. Under the firſt, a perfect virtue is required; under the ſecond, a total corruption is ſuppoſed: yet in point of mere form, there being nothing fixed in the ranks and diſtinctions of men, beyond the caſual and temporary poſſeſſion of power, ſocieties eaſily paſs from a condition in which every individual has an equal title to reign, into one in which they are equally deſtined to ſerve. The ſame qualities in both, courage, popularity, addreſs, and military conduct, raiſe the ambitious to eminence. With theſe qualities, the citizen or the ſlave eaſily paſſes from the ranks to the command of an army, from an obſcure to an illuſtrious ſtation. In either, a ſingle perſon may rule with unlimited ſway; and in both, the populace may break down every barrier of order, and reſtraint of law.

IF we ſuppoſe that the equality eſtabliſhed among the ſubjects of a deſpotic ſtate, has inſpired its members with confidence, intrepidity, and the love of juſtice; the deſpotic

ſpotic prince, having ceaſed to be an object of fear, muſt ſink among the croud. If, on the contrary, the perſonal equality which is enjoyed by the members of a democratical ſtate, ſhould be valued merely as an equal pretenſion to the objects of avarice and ambition, the monarch may ſtart up anew, and be ſupported by thoſe who mean to ſhare in his profits. When the covetous and mercenary aſſemble in parties, it is of no conſequence under what leader they inliſt, whether Cæſar or Pompey; the hopes of rapine or power are the only motives from which they become attached to either.

In the diſorder of corrupted ſocieties, the ſcene has been frequently changed from democracy to deſpotiſm, and from the laſt too, in its turn, to the firſt. From amidſt the democracy of corrupt men, and from a ſcene of lawleſs confuſion, the tyrant aſcends a throne with arms reeking in blood. But his abuſes, or his weakneſſes, in the ſtation which he has gained, in their turn, awaken and give way to the ſpirit of mutiny and revenge. The cries of murder and deſolation, which in the ordinary courſe of military government terrified the ſubject in his private retreat, are carried through the vaults, and made to pierce the grates and iron doors of the ſeraglio. Democracy ſeems to revive in a ſcene of wild diſorder and tumult: but both the extremes are but the tranſient fits of paroxyſm or languor in a diſtempered ſtate.

If men be any where arrived at this meaſure of depravity, there appears no immediate hope of redreſs. Neither the aſcendency of the multitude, nor that of the tyrant, will ſecure the adminiſtration of juſtice: neither the licence of mere tumult, nor the calm of dejection and ſervitude, will teach the citizen that he was born for candour and affection to his fellow-creatures. And if the ſpeculative would find that habitual ſtate of war which they are ſometimes pleaſed to honour with the name of *the ſtate of nature*, they will find it in the conteſt that ſubſiſts between the deſpotical prince and his ſubjects, not in the firſt approaches of a rude and ſimple tribe to the condition and the domeſtic arrangement of nations.

PART