

self, adopt the very doctrine of Aristotle and Des Cartes, both of whom held the same tenet? the former, indeed, calling this separate apparition a *phantasm*, which is a mere change of the Latin term apparition into a Greek word.*

But where, let me again ask, is the residence, and what is the nature of this many-titled faculty, which is neither sense nor mind; and is thus capable of discerning what neither sense nor mind can comprehend? Every other principle or faculty has its peculiar seat, and we know how to track it to its form. Instinct is the operation of the power of organized life by the exercise of certain natural laws, directing it to the perfection of the individual; and wherever organized life is to be found, there is instinct. Irritation exists in the muscular fibre; sensation in nervous cords; intelligence in the gland of the brain: for there is its seat, whatever may be its essence. But where is the seat, and what is the nature of this new principle? Is it capable of a separate existence? Does it expire with the body? Or does it accompany and still direct the soul after death? These are important questions: what is the answer to them? Or is there any other to be found than that of Dr. Reid already noticed?—"Common sense is a part of human nature which hath never been explained."†

And what, after all, is it designed to teach us? What is the number and the precise character of those primary maxims, or instinctive notions, or natural dictates, or inspired truths, or whatsoever else they may be called, which form the sum of its communication? How are we to know what is a genuine and infallible first principle from what has the mere semblance of one and is spurious? Are the founders of the system agreed upon this subject among themselves? If so, they are far more fortunate than the Cartesians upon their first principles, the *κοινὰ ἔννοιαι* of their own school. If they be not, their foundation slips from them in a moment, and all is wild and visionary; and every one may find a first principle in what his own fancy may suggest, or his own inclination lead him to. Yet we have no proof that any such convention has ever been settled; nor has any individual been bold enough to furnish a catalogue from the repository of his own endowment.

In few words, the whole of this hypothesis is nothing more than an attempt to revive the Cartesian scheme, so far as relates to, perhaps, the most obnoxious part of it, the doctrine of innate ideas, but to revive it under another name. Beattie and Stewart have, in fact, indirectly admitted as much, though neither of them have chosen to avow the design openly. The worst and most dangerous part of Mr. Locke's system, in the opinion of Dr. Beattie, is his first book—that very book in which this doctrine meets with its death-blow. While Mr. Stewart, notwithstanding the contempt with which he professes to treat this fanciful tenet of innate ideas, asserts almost immediately afterward, that his chief objection to it consists in its name, and the absurdities that have been connected with it;‡ and adds, that "perhaps he might even venture to say," if separated from these, it would agree in substance with the conclusion he had been attempting to establish.¶

It was my intention to have pursued this hypothesis in another direction, and to have pointed out its decisive tendency to an encouragement of mental indolence and immorality; a tendency, however, altogether unperceived by

* "The scarlet rose which is before me is still a scarlet rose when I shut my eyes, and was so at midnight when no eye saw it. The colour remains when the appearance ceases: it remains the same when the appearance changes. To a person in the jaundice it has still another appearance; but he is easily convinced that the change is in his eye, and not in the colour of the object. When a coloured body is presented, there is a certain APPARITION to the eye or to the mind, which we have called the appearance of colour. Mr. Locke calls it an idea, and, indeed, it may be called so with the greatest propriety. Hence the appearance is, in the imagination, so closely united with the quality called a scarlet colour, that they are apt to be mistaken for one and the same thing, although they are in reality so different and so unlike, that one is an idea in the mind, the other is a quality of body."—Inquiry, &c. ch. vi. lecture iv. p. 172, 173. 175, edit. 4. Lond. 1785.

† Essay iii. p. 120.

‡ Inquiry, ch. v. sect. iii. p. 115.
§ "Perhaps I might even venture to say that, were the ambitious and obnoxious epithet *innate* laid aside, and all the absurdities discarded which are connected either with the Platonic, with the Scholastic, or with the Cartesian hypothesis, concerning the nature of *ideas*," this last theory ("the antiquated theory of innate ideas," as he has just above called it, and to which he here refers) would agree in substance with the conclusion which I have been attempting to establish by an induction of facts."—Phil. Essay iii. p. 120, 4to. 1810.

the uncorrupt and honourable minds of its justly eminent leaders. But our time has already expired, and I must leave it to yourselves to calculate at home, what must be the necessary result of a theory, provided it could ever be seriously embraced upon an extensive scale, that teaches, on the one hand, that intelligence is subordinate to instinct, and that our truest knowledge is that which is afforded by the *dictates of nature*, without trouble or exertion; and on the other, that our *moral sense* is identical with our *instinctive propensities*; and that the *constitution of our nature* is an infallible guide, and can never lead us amiss. This mischievous, but unquestionably unforeseen, tendency of the theory of common sense, I must leave you to follow up at your leisure; but I cannot quit this subject without once more adverting to the total failure of this theory, in accomplishing the chief point for which it was devised,—I mean that of engaging us to believe, in opposition to the philosophical vagaries of the Bishop of Cloyne and Mr. Hume, as well as of the earlier idealists, not only that the external world has a substantive existence, but that it substantively exists in every respect as it APPEARS to exist. I have already observed, that while Dr. Berkeley was contending, metaphysically, that we have no proof of a material world, because we have no proof of any thing but the existence of our own minds and ideas, M. Boscovich was contending, physically, that we have no proof that matter contains any of the qualities which it APPEARS to contain; that whatever the OSTENSIBLE FORMS of bodies may present to us, it has in itself no such properties as they *seem* to exhibit; that the whole visible creation is nothing more than a collection of indivisible, unextended atoms, or mere mathematical points, whose only attributes are certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and, consequently, that every thing we behold is a MERE PHENOMENON,—AN APPARITION, and nothing more.

Now, meaning to oppose this doctrine, and every doctrine of a similar import, could it be supposed possible, if the fact did not stare us in the face from his own writings, that Dr. Reid would, after all, avow and contend, not indeed for the same, but for a parallel tenet, and support it almost in the same terms? Could it be supposed that he would tell us, as we have already seen he has told us, that every object has its APPARITION; that the object is one thing, and its APPARITION another; that the object is IN ONE PLACE and its apparition IN ANOTHER; and that neither the mind nor the eye behold the object itself, but only its APPARITION OF APPEARANCE, ITS PHANTASM OR PHENOMENON?

But I have to draw still more largely upon your astonishment; for it yet remains for me to inform you, that Mr. Dugald Stewart, who may be regarded as the key-stone of Dr. Reid's system, and the chief aim of whose writings has been to proscribe the hypothesis of Berkeley, has himself fallen, not unintentionally, as Dr. Reid seems to have done, but openly and avowedly, into a modification of Boscovich's hypothesis; and has even brought forward its more prominent principles, "as necessary," I adopt his own terms, "to complete Dr. Reid's speculations."* He labours, indeed, to prove, that the two hypotheses of Berkeley and Boscovich have no resemblance or connexion with each other; and I am ready to admit, that in some respects there is a difference, since Boscovich allows us a visionary material world, a world of apparitions, or orderly phenomena, in the language of Leibnitz, *phenomenes bien réglés*, while Berkeley allows us no material world whatever; though he, too, has his world of phenomena: but I must contend that they are, to all intents and purposes, alike in their opposition to that tenet, which it is the leading feature of Reid's theory to establish,—I mean that we have an internal principle, that proves to us that the world around us is not a vain show, but a solid REALITY, and that every thing actually is as it appears to be. So that the theory before us, even in the hands of its founder and principal supporter, has strikingly failed in the object for which it was devised; and, for all the purposes in question, the former might just as well have continued in the profession of Bishop Berkeley's principles, as have deserted them, and set up a new scheme for himself.

* Essay ii. ch. ii. p. 80, and compare with ch. i. p. 62, 63.

Under these circumstances I must leave it to the enlightened audience before me to choose out of these different hypotheses as they may think best. For myself, I freely confess, that I have no ambition to soar into the higher rank and the infallible knowledge of an instinctive creature, and shall modestly content myself with the humbler character of a rational and intelligent being, still steadily steering by the lowly but sober lamps of a Bacon, a Newton, a Locke, a Butler, a Price, and a Paley, instead of being captivated by the beautiful and brilliant, but vacillating and illusive, coruscations of these northern lights.

LECTURE VII.

ON HUMAN HAPPINESS.

It has required, I apprehend, but a very slight attention to the course of study we have lately been following up, to be convinced of the truth of the remark with which we opened the series,—I mean, that the subject it proposed to discuss is, of all subjects whatever that relate to human entity, the most difficult and intractable. And absurd and visionary as have been many of the opinions which it has brought before us, let us in conclusion, check all undue levity, by recollecting that they are the absurdities and visions of the first philosophers and sages of their respective periods; of the wisest and, with a few exceptions, of the best of mankind; to whom, in most other respects, we ought to bow with implicit homage, and who have only foundered from too daring a spirit of adventure, and amid rocks and shoals which laugh at the experience of the pilot.

For myself, I freely confess to you, that my own hopes of success are but very humble. I have done my best, however, to render the subject intelligible; and if, in the progress of it, I should also have betrayed dreams and absurdities, I have only to entreat that they may be visited with the candour which I have endeavoured to extend to others; fully aware that the ablest arguments I have been able to submit are not fitted, if I may adopt the eloquent words of Mr. Burke, “to abide the test of a captious controversy, but of a sober, and even forgiving examination; that they are not armed at all points for battle, but dressed to visit those who are willing to give a peaceful entrance to truth.”

There is one point, however, and the most important point we have contemplated, in which all the different schools seem to be agreed,—I mean, that of moral distinctions. Whatever may be the roads the different travellers have lighted upon, whether short or circuitous, smooth or entangled, they all at last find themselves, in this respect, arrive at the same central spot; and coincide in prescribing the same rules of duty, enjoining the same conduct, and, with a few exceptions, delivering the same determinations. No philosopher in the world has ever dreamed of confounding virtue with vice, or of writing a treatise on the benefit of committing crimes. Let us search where we will, we shall find that there is a something in human nature, when once emerged from the barbarism of savage life, that leads the learned and the unlearned to approve the one and to condemn the other, even where their own conduct is involved in the condemnation.

And what is this something in human nature that conducts to so general a conclusion? A set or system of innate ideas and first principles, replies one class of philosophers; a moral instinct or impulse of common sense, replies another class; the intrinsic loveliness and beauty of virtue itself, replies a third; because the attributes of virtue are useful and agreeable either to ourselves or to others, replies a fourth; because it conducts to human happiness, replies a fifth; and because it is the will of God, replies a sixth.

But while all thus agree in the conclusion, the question that leads to it still

returns upon us: What proof have we of the existence of such innate ideas or instinctive impulse? of the intrinsic beauty of virtue? that it is useful to us, productive of our happiness, or that it is the will of God it should be cultivated? or rather, what proof have we that the original position is true, and that there is a something in human nature in general, which induces us to prefer virtue to vice?

The original position is true, but the reasons urged in support of it are neither equally true nor equally adequate, even where they are true.

It is not true that we have either innate ideas or moral instincts that impel us to a love of virtue; for in such cases the most savage tribes among mankind would be the most virtuous; their præcognita, or innate ideas, being but little disturbed by foreign ideas, acquired by education or extensive commerce with the world; and their moral instincts as little disturbed by foreign habits acquired from the same causes.

There has often arisen in the mind an unaccountable whim, of supposing that a savage life, or state of nature, is the best and purest mode of human existence; and novelists, poets, and sometime even philosophers have equally ranted upon the paucity of its wants, the simplicity of its pursuits, the solidity of its pleasures, and the strength and constancy of its attachments. It is here, we have been told, that the human soul develops its proper energies, and displays itself in all its native benevolence and dignity: here all things belong equally to every one; the only law is the will of the individual the only feeling a sublime, unselfish philanthropy. This whim became epidemic in France about the beginning of the French Revolution, and was, in fact, the monster mania that led to it. And the contagion, not long afterward, began to show itself among many individuals of our own country, who, in the height of their phrensy, laboured earnestly to promote the same kind of trials among ourselves that our neighbours were actually exhibiting. The history is fresh in the mind of every one, and it is not necessary to pursue it. It is sufficient to observe, that it led, in a short time, to consequences so mischievous, as to work their own cure; and to afford another living proof of the fact I endeavoured pointedly to establish in a late lecture, that barbarism, vice, and misery are, by an immutable law of nature, the inseparable associates of each other.* Throw your eyes to whatever part of the globe or to whatever history of mankind you please, and you will find it so without an exception. Other animals have instincts that control their appetites, and lead them insensibly to the perfection of their respective kinds; that inculcate constancy where constancy is necessary, and compel them to provide for and take the charge of their young. Man has no such instincts, whatever; he has reason, indeed, a more ennobling and efficient faculty, but it must be called forth, for it is a dormant principle in savage life. And hence, destitute of the one, and uninfluenced by the other, he is the perpetual slave of his ungoverned and ungovernable passions, and is the only animal in the world that has been known to kill or abandon its own offspring in a state of destitute and helpless infancy; and to murder its own kind for the purpose of feasting upon it: a fact too well established to be doubted of; and which, instead of being confined to a single climate or a single people, has apparently been common to all countries, when under the influence of gross barbarism; which still exists among various tribes in Africa, South America, and Australia, and particularly among the islands of the South Sea, and which, according to the concurrent testimony of the best Greek and Roman writers, as Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, and Pomponius Mela, was formerly to be traced among the Scythians, Tartars, and Massagetæ of Asia, and the Lestrignons of Europe. Strabo, indeed, ascribes the same practice even to the Irish in his day, and Cælius Rhodriginus to their neighbours of Scotland; while Thevenot asserts that, when he was in India in 1665, human flesh was publicly sold in the market at Decca, about forty leagues from Baroche.

Consentaneous to this view of the subject are the following remarks of

* Series II. Lecture XIII.