LECTURE VIII.

ON THE GENERAL FACULTIES OF THE MIND, AND ITS FREEDOM IN WILLING.

In the commencement of the successive series of lectures which I have had the honour of delivering before this respectable school of science, I stated, as it may be recollected by many of the audience before me, that the subject I proposed to discuss would be of considerable extent and variety;—that it would embrace, though with a rapid survey, the whole circle of physics, in the most enlarged sense in which this term has been employed by Aristotle or Lord Bacon; and, consequently, would touch slightly, yet, as I hoped, with a correct outline, upon all the more interesting and important features of matter and of mind. It may be remembered, that I proposed to unfold to you the general principles, laws, and phenomena, as far as we are capable of tracing them, of the world without us, and the world within us; to follow the footsteps of nature, or rather of the God of nature, in the gradual evolution of that nice, and delicate, and ever-rising scale of wonders that surround us on every side, from the simplest elements to the most perfect and harmonious systems of visible or demonstrable existences; from shapeless matter to form, from form to feeling, from feeling to intellect; from the clod to the crystal, from the crystal to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from brutal life to man. All this I have endeavoured to accomplish; feebly and imperfectly, indeed, but I have still endeavoured it with whatever may be the powers that the breath of the Almighty has implanted within me.

But we have not stopped here; having reached in man the summit of the visible pyramid of creation, we have tremblingly ventured to take a glance at the interior of his mysterious structure; we have followed him, with no unhallowed eye, into the temple of the soul; we have amused ourselves, for, after all, it has been little or nothing more, with conjectures about its essence, and have commenced an analysis of those faculties so fearfully and wonderfully planned, which place him at an almost infinite distance from the brute creation, and approximate him to the sphere of celestial intelligences: to that order of pure and happy spirits with whom it is his high prerogative, if not forfeited by his own misconduct on earth, that he shall associate hereafter, and press forward in the pursuit of an infinite and self-rewarding knowledge, and in the fruition of an endless and unclouded felicity.

This last topic, however, we have entered upon, and nothing more: we have noticed, indeed, the general furniture of the mind, and the diversified faculties with which it is endowed; but we have only extended our investigation beyond such notice to the principles of perception, thought, and REASON, or the discursive power; and to those communications, or ideas of objects or subjects, derived externally or from within, upon which the discursive power is ever exercising itself; and which, as they are obtained from the one or the other of these two sources, are denominated ideas of sensation or of reflection.

Now, besides an ability to *perceive*, *think*, or *reason*, we find the mind possessed of an almost infinite variety of other attributes or faculties, implanted in it for the wisest and most beneficent purposes. We behold it endowed with consciousness, judgment, memory, imagination; with a power of choosing or refusing; with admiration and desire; hope and fear, love and hatred; grief and joy, transport and terror; with anger, jealousy, and despair. And we behold each of these faculties, as called into action, producing a correspondent effect upon the organs of the body; giving rise to what the painters call EXPRESSION, or the language of the features; and to articulate sounds, or the language of the lips; lighting up the eye, and animating the countenance; invigorating the speech, and harmonizing its periods; or, on the contrary, filling the eye and the countenance with gloom or indignation, and the voice with sighs and bitter rebukes.

The external signs thus produced, and representative of the inward emotion,

operate in their turn with a reflex influence, and rekindle in the mind the feelings that have given birth to them. And hence the origin and soul-subduing power of tender or impassioned poetry, or of manly and forcible eloquence; as also the cause why we feel equally hurried away by the classical debates of the senate, and the fictitious distresses of the drama.

We behold, moreover, in different persons, these energetic principles differently modified or associated in every variety of combination: sometimes one of them, and sometimes another, and sometimes several leagued together, peculiarly active, and obtaining a mastery over the rest. And we behold these effects in different instances, from different causes; as peculiarity of temperament, peculiarity of climate, custom, habit, or education. And hence the origin of moral and intellectual character; the particular dispositions and propensities of individuals or of whole nations. Hence one man is naturally violent, and another gentle; one a prey to perpetual gloom, and another full of hope and confidence; one irascible and revengeful, and another all benevolence and philanthropy; one shrewd and witty, and another heavy and inert. Hence the refinement and patriotism of ancient Greece; the rough hardihood of the Romans; and the commercial spirit of Carthage; and hence, in modern times, the silent and plodding industry of the Dutch; the chivalrous honour of the Spaniards of the last century, unpoisoned by the deadly fever of Corsican morality; the restless loquacity and intriguing ambition of the French; and, may I be permitted to add, the high heroic courage, and love of freedom, the generosity and promptitude to forgive injuries, the unswerving honesty and lofty spirit of adventure, that peculiarly signalize the inhabitants of the British isles: all which are subjects that yet remain to be treated of and elucidated, and which seem to promise us an ample harvest of entertainment and instruction.

Let us begin with the mental faculties themselves. These, as we have already seen, are numerous and complicated; so much so indeed, that it is difficult to arrange and analyze them; and hence I do not, at the present moment, recollect a single treatise upon the subject, which gives us a clear and methodical classification of them. I shall take leave, therefore, to offer a new distribution; and shall divide them into the three general heads, of powers or faculties of the UNDERSTANDING; powers or faculties of ELECTION; and powers or faculties of EMOTION. To the first belong the principles of perception, thought, reason, judgment, memory, and imagination; to the second, those of choosing and refusing, or of WILLING and NILLING, to adopt an old and very expressive metaphysical term, that ought never to have grown obsolete; to the third belong those of hope, fear, grief, and joy, love, hatred, anger, and revenge, or whatever else is capable of moving the mind from a state of tranquillity and rest.

All these are, properly speaking, acts or actions of the mind; yet, as, during the operation of the last set, the mind becomes at times irregularly and involuntarily agitated and affected, though, by the force of its own attributes, as the voluntary muscles of the body are often thrown into trepidation and spasms by the contraction of their own fibres, metaphysicians, and especially those of Germany, have seemed inclined to restrict the name of mental actions to the operations of the understanding and the will, and to give the name of *affections* or *passions* to those productive of mental emotion: to those transitions of feeling into which the mind is involuntarily hurried by the stimulus of this class of its own powers, and under the stress of which it may thus far be said to be passive; and hence, if I mistake not, the application of the term passions (which has so much puzzled the metaphysicians) to certain conditions or powers of the mind, which import activity and exertion. It is upon the same ground, that where the mind is completely subdued, and suffers extreme violence, we employ the term with peculiar emphasis; thus, when a man is raging either with anger or love, he is said pre-eminently to be in a passion, or to entertain a passion; and thus again, but in a far more serious and solemn sense, the Christian world applies the same term in its highest force of signification to the agony of our blessed Saviour.

Now, it is the peculiar feature of physiology, and especially as studied upon the principles of induction, that, as far as it has proceeded, it has discovered a general adaptation of means to a proposed end; and has hence placed the doctrine of final causes, as it has been incorrectly, and not without some degree of confusion, denominated,—of causes, however, operating to a final intention,—upon a basis too strong to be shaken by the ridicule of many modern philosophers, sheltering themselves under an erroneous construction of Lord Bacon's views upon the subject.* What, then, are the uses or proposed ends of this extensive and complicated machinery of the mind of man? What are the respective parts which its various faculties, in the order in which we have now arranged them, are intended to fulfil, and the means by which they are to operate?

Their object is threefold, and in every respect most important, and admirably calculated to prove the wisdom and benevolence of the almighty Architect: they are the grand sources by which man becomes endowed with knowledge, moral freedom, and happiness; and is hence fitted to run the elevated race of a rational and accountable being. From the powers of the understanding he derives the first; from those of volition or election the second; and from the passions or motive powers the third. Yet never let it be forgotten, that he can in no respect, or at least to no considerable extent or good purpose, possess either the one or the other, unless the mind, as an individual agent, maintain its self-dominion, and exercise a due degree of government over its own forces. This, I think, must be obvious to every one; and it is in this harmonious balance, this equable guidance and control, that the perfection of the human character can alone consist and exhibit itself. Unless the faculties of the understanding be called forth, there can be no knowledge; and unless they be properly directed, though there may indeed be knowledge, it will be of a worse nature than utter ignorance; we shall pluck, not of the mixed tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as it stood before the fall, but from the tree of the knowledge of evil alone, without any union or participation of good. In like manner, unless the will and the passions be under an equal degree of guidance, the mind can be neither independent nor happy; a mental chaos must usurp the place of order, and the whole be misrule and confusion.

We are too much in the habit, both in common life and in philosophy, of regarding the faculties of the mind as distinct agents from the mind itself, as though the latter were nothing more than a house or repository for their reception. This is particularly true in respect to the faculty of the WILL; for we are perpetually told that the will operates upon the understanding or the mind; and that unless the WILL be free, the man himself can have no freedom.

Now, the will, like the memory or the judgment, is a mere power or ability, and freedom is another power or ability; but powers or abilities of one kind cannot belong to or be the property of powers or abilities of another kind: they can only belong to or be the property of some agent, and in this case the mind is the only agent. The question, therefore, whether the will be free, can only mean, if it mean any thing, whether the mind be free, of which the will is a power or attribute; and to the question thus modified, I have no hesitation in stating, that the mind is perfectly free to do whatever it wills. I do not say whatever it *desires*; for the DESIRE is a different faculty from the WILL; and though too generally confounded with each other, for the want of clear ideas upon the subject, the two are frequently in a state of direct opposition. Thus, a man may desire to fly, but he never wills it; and for this plain reason, that though the action may be a matter of desire, it can never be a matter of volition; for to suppose the will or power of choosing to be exerted upon a subject in which there is no power of choosing, is to suppose an absurdity. In like manner, on the contrary, the schoolboy may will to get his task, though sorely against his desire or inclination, and the timid female, for the benefit of her health, may will to be plunged into the cold bath, though with as great a reluctance. So, when a kind and indulgent father chastises his son for disobedience, the mind, urged by proper motives, consents, and consequently wills it; it prefers inflicting the chastisement to abstaining from it: but while it wills or prefers the punishment, it is so far from desiring it, that it probably hates it more than the child itself does.

* Causarum finalium inquisitio sterilis est, et, tanquam Virgo Deo consecrata, nihil parit. Such is his celebrated aphorism: but the term *inquisitio* does not relate to the subject or doctrine itself, but merely to its being made a branch of physical instead of metaphysical philosophy. The discoveries of modern times have sufficiently shown that Bacon was deceived upon this last point. But it is perfectly clear from other passages in his writings that he did not mean to controvert the doctrine itself. See Stewart's Elements, vol. ii. p. 454.

It has been said that, in this case, the feeling of desire is still exercised; that the father, though he does not desire the punishment, desires the ultimate good of his child; that the same power of the mind is therefore still in activity, though directed to a different object; and, consequently, that willing is nothing more than desire in a higher range of the scale, or a state of predominant exertion. But this is to confound rather than to simplify the feelings of the mind. Desire is always accompanied with pleasure, and can never be altogether separated from it; for no man can desire that which is wholly and essentially painful. Now, though the father takes a pleasure in the good of his child, he takes no pleasure, but, on the contrary, great and unmixed pain, in his chastisement; and unless pleasure and pain be one and the same feeling, we cannot apply the simple idea of desire to both, though that of the will is equally applicable. And hence the will and the desire must necessarily be regarded as different faculties of the mind. In like manner, a person labouring under a severe fit of toothache may say that he desires to have the tooth taken out; but in saying this he does not desire the pain of its extraction, but only the ease which he hopes will follow upon its removal: for he hates the pain, and would avoid it, and have the tooth removed without it, if possible; but he consents to, or wills it, for the sake of that prospective advantage which alone is the object of his desire, as it is also of his will. So that here again, while the desire is limited to the one state of body, the will applies to both, and affords another proof that they are two distinct mental powers. In like manner, Revelation tells us repeatedly, and as strictly as it does emphatically, that God "hath no pleasure or desire in the death of the wicked;" but it tells us also, that God is, nevertheless, effecting, and, consequently, willing, their death or punishment every day.

Freedom of mind, then, or an exercise of the will, is a distinct power or attribute from that of desire, and can only respect actions in which there is a condition of choice. A man standing on a cliff, has a power of leaping twenty yards downward into the sea, or of continuing where he is; and, having this option, he is free, and exercises his will accordingly. But he has no power of leaping twenty yards upwards into the air, and it can never become a question with him—a subject of deliberation or option—whether he shall leap upwards or not; and, consequently, as this can never become a question with him, the mind can never will it, and its freedom remains undisturbed.

Here, then, we rest: the mind is free to do whatever it wills. But the ingenuity of man has not been content with letting the subject remain at this point: it has pushed it still farther, and inquired whether the mind is free to will as well as to act after it has willed? and this, after all, is the real drift of the inquiry with which the world has been so long harassed, whether the will itself be free?

This question is a complex one; and its complexity has not always been sufficiently traced out and explained. The mind of every intelligent being can only will, or, in other words, be determined to do or forbear an act by a motive or moving power, and in this respect it is subject to a necessity issuing from the nature of things; but if, as I shall endeavour to show, the mind, by a voluntary operation of some one or more of its other faculties, of itself constitutes the motive, annuls it, or changes it for another, it must necessarily follow, that it has all the freedom of willing, as well as of acting, that an intelligent being is capable of possessing.

Now, the grand aim of every living, and especially of every intelligent

being, is good, pleasure, or happiness: for they all, as in the words of the poet, imply the same thing:—

O Happiness! our being's end and aim,
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content, whate'er thy name.

But good, pleasure, or happiness are generic names for a thousand different objects, each of which is pursued as many different ways, not only by different individuals, but sometimes at different periods by the very same person. In all these cases we perceive so many different motives or moving powers. Yet whence comes it, not only that different persons but that the same individual should have a different motive or moving power to-day from what he had yesterday, or perhaps only half an hour before?

The cause may, indeed, be some sudden and impetuous gust of passion by which the mind may be stormed and led captive, as by a *coup-de-main*; but it may also be a deliberate determination of the mind itself. And, in truth, this last is the general cause, to which a sudden and impetuous ebullition of the passions forms but a few occasional exceptions. It is this exercise of deliberation that alone renders man a rational and accountable being. All human laws act upon the same principle: they suppose him (saving the few extreme cases just alluded to) to be under the influence of a controlling judgment, and they reward or punish him accordingly. And such is the force of habit and long association, that we not unfrequently behold the judgment exercising this control, in a mind evidently unsound and wandering; and the cunning maniac concealing a skilful design or a deep-rooted passion till the due moment arrives for executing the one, or gratifying the other.

Now, in all these cases, the determination of the judgment, which forms the motive or moving power, is as much a voluntary act of the mind, whether right or wrong, as the change of one or more ciphers in the common arithmetical sum, in consequence of our discovering an error upon working it a second time. This determination, or motive, however, may be changed every hour, or even every minute; for the mind may take a new view of the subject: it may obtain clearer ideas from fresh sources; or other affections may be called into play than those which have hitherto produced an influence; and what before was decided to be a certain path to pleasure, may next be decided to be as certain a road to misery and ruin.

And so active is the judgment in asserting its control, that even where the mind is borne down by the most violent passions, it still strives, at times, to recover its authority, and is seldom quiet till it has succeeded. Let me offer a single example in elucidation of this assertion.

Behold the enamoured youth, who, after having struggled for years with an unebbing current of obstacles, finds himself, at length, in possession of the fair object of his heart's affection. Here, the reigning power must necessarily be the passion of love, and it would be somewhat cynical to look for any thing else. Ask him in what his happiness consists, and what are the motives that stimulate every action of his life, and he will at once point to his beloved bride, without whom, he will tell you, that all nature would be a blank: and with whom, that a wilderness would be a paradise. Behold her next, by the stealthy and startling hand of death, snatched away from his embraces. What now is the condition of the mind? the new motives that distract it? and the conduct to which they give rise? Is it possible that an ember of happiness can remain to him now?—Yes, even here, in the rack of anguish, he has still his delight—a lonely and melancholy one, I am compelled to grant, but he has his delight notwithstanding; and the mind is as much hurried away, and as violently by the present impulse, which is to weep over her remains, as by the past, which was to devote himself to her wishes:

He haunts the deep cathedral shade,
The green sward where his love is laid,
And hugs her urn, and o'er the tomb
Hangs, and enjoys the spectred gloom.

And oft to thee he lifts his eye,
Mild empress of the spangled sky!
And thanks thy dewy beams that guide
His footsteps to his clay-cold bride.
And oft he asks the starry train
That circle round thy silver reign,
By which her parting spirit pass'd,
And where she stay'd her flight at last.
He asks—and thither would he go—
For what has nature now below?

Thus far the mind has unquestionably evinced little or no control; and I bring forward these descriptions as instances of its subjugation. But even here, in one of the severest trials with which mankind can be visited, the mind gradually finds the means of recovering its ascendency; the passions by degrees become tranquillized, and in their turn subdued; the heart softened, the judgment corrected and fortified, and the reason set at liberty for reflection. The pale sufferer perceives, at length, that happiness, to be genuine, must be neither violent nor transitory; that its foundation must be permanent, and its nature unalloyed. He yields himself to this train of contemplation; and the mind, now fully reinstated in its government, indulges a sober and rational grief, and arrives at a sober and rational conclusion. It determines that earth has no such happiness to offer him; it may perhaps lead him farther, and prompt him to seek it in a sublimer source.

This description I have drawn from the natural passions of the human heart—passions that, in a greater or less degree, are common to all countries and ages; but there are passions of which uncultivated nature knows nothing, which are the baneful offspring of a morbid civilization and immoral habits, and which possess, if possible, a still more tyrannical control over the judgment than any that nature herself has implanted within it. Such is the passion for GAMBLING, which has often, even in the sobriety of our own climate, maddened the brain of men who, but for this, had been worthy members of society, and plunged them into the foulest vices, and at length, into the deadly gulf of suicide. One of the best pictures of the heart-rending despair of such a wretch, just before the perpetration of this horrible crime, is to be found in the description of Beverly in "*The Gamester*," who is thus painted to the life, in the inevitable ruin into which he was thrown after having staked the last resource and final hope of his wife and family on one unfortunate and fatal hazard:—

"When all was lost, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time with folded arms, stupid and motionless; then, snatching his sword that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down, and with a look of fixed attention drew figures on the floor. At last, he started up; looked wild, and trembled; and, like a woman seized with her sex's fits, laughed out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face. So he left the room."

Yet, even here, under the fell sway of this accursed incantation, we are not without examples of its being occasionally broken through, and its deadly fetters shaken off by the virtuous resolution of a mind determined to prove its independence, and to act according to the dictates of its better judgment. As an example of which, among many others, I may refer to the conduct of one of the first statesmen of our own country and our own age;—a statesman, whose name will ever be dear to Britain, on various accounts, but chiefly, perhaps, since under his administration, she set the glorious example to the world of abolishing the slave-trade. In early life it is well known that Mr. Fox was irresistibly addicted to this intoxicating passion; and it is also equally known, that in his maturer life, he tore himself from the farther prosecution of it, by a courageous determination from which he never departed.

It appears obvious, then, that the mind both can and ought to maintain a general mastery over all its faculties; and is able, at all times, except in extreme cases, to furnish itself with motives. And hence, though it is perfectly true that it cannot will, or, in other words, cannot choose or refuse without a motive, and to this extent is under a necessity, yet the origination or change

of motives being vested in itself, it is equally true that it is so far free to will, as well as to act, or perform what it wills.

If the distinction here offered had been properly attended to, we should, as I am inclined to think, have had fewer opponents, in all ages, to the doctrine of the freedom of the mind, or of the will as it is commonly denominated. Among the chief of these opponents we may rank the Fatalists of ancient, and the Necessarians of modern times.

The general train of argument by which they have been led, and the ground of its adoption, are not essentially different. Motives, volitions, and actions are supposed by both sects to be of the same nature, in respect to relative force and operation, as physical causes and effects; and, consequently, the same catenation, or necessary dependence of one fact upon another, which marks the experienced train of events in the natural world, is conceived to be perpetually taking place in the moral: "All voluntary actions," as Mr. Hume observes, "being subjected to the same laws of necessity with the operations of matter, and there being a continued chain of necessary causes preordained, and predetermined, reaching from the original cause of all to every single volition of every human being."* Or, as another writer upon the same subject has expressed it,—"The course of events, both moral and physical, is fixed and immutable; and thoughts, volitions, and actions proceed in one interrupted concatenation from the beginning to the end of time, agreeably to the laws originally established by the great Creator."

So that, under the same circumstances, the same motives must be produced in the mind of every man, give rise to the same volitions, and be succeeded by the same actions; every one of these, to adopt the language of the Fatalists, being equally a link of that

——golden everlasting chain
Whose strong embrace holds heaven, and earth, and main.

If it were not so, it is pretended that there could be no mutual dependence or confidence between man and man. No person, from the appearance of one action as performed by his neighbour, could infer a second, or form any opinion of his character. And even the doctrine of divine prescience must be entirely relinquished; since, without such a necessary and consecutive connexion, it must be impossible for the Deity himself to foresee any future event, or to know it otherwise than as it occurs at the moment.

It was not my intention to have touched upon this controversy, but the principles upon which it hinges are so closely blended with the subject before us, that it is impossible altogether to elude it, though the remarks I propose to offer shall be as brief and compressed as I am able to make them.

In the first place, then, whatever be the necessary connexion between motives, volitions, and actions, it is by no means true that they are "subjected to the *same laws of necessity* with the operations of matter." Let me support this assertion by a reference to a few simple facts. A needle, or an iron ball, placed between two magnets of equal power, will fall to neither of them, but remain midway at rest for ever, suspended between equally contending attractions. Now, if the same laws of necessity control the moral as control the physical world, a similar moral cause must produce a similar moral effect; and the traveller who, by accident, after having lost himself in a forest, should meet with two roads running in opposite or different directions, and offering in every respect an equal attraction, must, like the needle or bullet, remain for ever at rest, because the motive to take one course is just equipoised by the motive to take the other. But can any man in his senses suppose he would remain there for ever, and so starve himself between equally contending attractions? Or, rather, can any man suppose such a fact, provided the traveller himself were in his senses? Yet Montaigne, in support of this hypothesis, has actually supposed such a fact, and has put forth the following whimsical or facetious example: "Where the mind," says he, "is at the same

* Essays: On Liberty and Necessity, vol. ii.

time equally influenced by two equal desires, it is certain it can never comply with either of them, because a consent and preference would evince a dissimilarity in their value. If a man should chance to be placed between a bottle of wine and a Westphalia ham, with an equal inclination to eat and to drink, there could, in this case, be no possible remedy; and, by the law of necessity, he must die either of hunger or thirst. The Stoics, therefore," continues he, "who were most rigidly attached to the doctrine of fatalism, when asked how the mind determines when two objects of equal desire are presented to it, or what is the reason that out of a number of crown pieces it selects one rather than another, there being no motive to excite a preference, reply, that this action of the mind is extraordinary and irregular, and proceeds from an impulse equally irregular and fortuitous. But it would be better," continues Montaigne, "in my estimation, to maintain that no two objects can be presented to us so perfectly equal, but that some trifling difference may subsist, and some small superiority be discoverable either in the one or the other."

And, no doubt, it would be better to maintain such a position; but who does not see that this is to give up the question? to renounce the point upon which we are at issue, and openly to confess that there does not exist in the moral world the same counterpoise of cause and cause that is to be perpetually met with in the natural.

Let us confine ourselves to one more example. A cannon-ball, discharged from the centre of a circle, and equally attracted to the north and to the east, will proceed towards neither point; but at an angle of 22½ degrees, or immediately between the two. But is there any one, unincumbered with a strait-waistcoat, who can suppose that such a rule has any application to the motive powers of the mind? who can conceive, that a man, starting at Blackfriar's Bridge, and having business so equally urgent at Highgate and at Mile-end, that he is incapable of determining to which place he shall proceed first, would proceed to neither, but take a course between the two, and walk in a straight line to Hackney or Newington-Green? Yet, unless he should thus act, not occasionally, or by accident, but uniformly, and at all times, there is not in the mind the same law of operation, the same sort of necessity, as in matter; but a something, whatever it may be, producing and designed to produce an irreconcilable distinction; and, in the correct language of the Epicurean philosophers, perpetually labouring to prevent the same blind force from vanquishing the one as it leads captive the other:

Ne mens ipsa necessum
Intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agundis,
Et devicta quasi, cogatur ferre, patique.*
Lest the mind
Bend to a stern necessity within,
And, like a slave, determine but by force.

But we are told, that unless the moral world were thus constituted, there could be no mutual confidence between man and man; no series of actions could be depended upon, and it would be impossible to distinguish between one character and another; or, in other words, how long the same individual would maintain the same character.

Now this kind of argument, if accurately examined, just as much invalidates the doctrine it is intended to support as the preceding. There is no one who pretends to place the same degree of confidence in the general course of human actions as in the experienced train of natural events. Even where the circumstances to reason from are equally definite, moral dependence is in all instances less certain than physical, and never amounts to more than a probability. The closest friendships may fail, the purest virtue become tarnished; and, in the words of Sophocles, which I must beg leave to put into our own language—

* De Rer. Nat. ii. 289.

> The power of all things cease; e'en sacred oaths
> At times be broke, and the determined mind
> Forego its steady purpose.

Material causes, on the contrary, are regular in their operations, and uninterrupted in their effects. Nobody doubts that the sun will rise to-morrow; that a cannon-ball will sink in water; or that, if the lamps over our heads were to be extinguished, we should be in darkness. The power of Buonaparte, when in the zenith of his success, was absolute and almost unbounded, but did even this ensure steadiness of conduct? Quite the reverse. We behold the decrees of to-day overthrown by those of to-morrow, and, in the blind and overwhelming career of his ambition, his hosts of bloodhounds that have just plundered his enemies next sent against his friends; we behold every thing in nature, that is within his reach, tottering and out of joint; while every thing that is beyond and above him continues steadfast and unchangeable; the air is as vital as ever, the seasons as regular in their courses, and, to adopt the beautiful language of our poet-laureate—

> The moon,
> Regardless of the stir of this low world,
> Holds on her heavenly way.

But we are farther told, that unless there be the same fixed and dependent chain established in the moral creation which unquestionably exists in the physical, the Deity himself could have no prescience or foreknowledge of human conduct. And so forcible has this argument appeared to some men, and men, too, of acknowledged worth and piety, that in the dilemma into which they have felt themselves thrown, like the Brahmins of the East, they have utterly abandoned the doctrine of divine prescience in favour of that of moral liberty.

Shallow and impotent conclusion! Absurd admission of an hostility that has no existence! As though he who sees through infinite space is incapable of seeing through the brief duration of time; or as though, like Theseus in the Cretan labyrinth, the great Author of nature stands in need of a thread to guide him through the maze of his own creation, and depends upon every preceding event as a direction-post to that which follows. There are contingencies in the natural as well as in the moral world, though they are far less frequent because far less necessary. Miracles are of this description; they are direct and palpable deviations from the common laws of nature, the common routine of causes and effects; and he who denies that the Deity can know any thing of contingencies, in the one case, ought also to deny that he can know any thing of them in the other; for the necessary and consecutive chain of causation, upon which alone such philosophers found the attribute of prescience, is equally broken in both instances. But such philosophers have to deny still more than this, or they must abandon their principle altogether. They have equally to deny that the Deity can see or know any thing of such anomalies, even when present; for if he can only know events as successive and necessary links of preceding events, the tie being broken, on their appearance, and the anomalous events detached, he can have no more knowledge of them when gone by or present than when future. It may, perhaps, be thought, that when present and operating they pass before him! Pass before him! O puerile and miserable conception of Divinity! All nature is equally before him, in every point of space, and every moment of eternity, and he who denies God to be every where, must deny him to be any where; unless he sees and knows every thing, he must see and know nothing. Miracles and moral contingencies, then, are as much provided for, and must be so, as the most common train of natural events. It is true, we know nothing of the arrangement by which they subsist; but they are and must be provided for, nevertheless. It is here, and here only, we ought to rest—in an equal acknowledgment of human ignorance and divine perfection;—for it is, assuredly, not quite consistent either with the modesty of genuine philosophy, or the reverence of religious faith, to controvert a truth because we cannot account for it; or

to pluck away attribute after attribute from the diadem of the Deity, out of mere compliment to the demand of a fanciful and empty hypothesis. I retreat from this subject, however, with pleasure. It is too perplexed and mysterious for popular discussion, and I am fearful of darkening it by illustration. I should not have touched upon it, but that I have been forced, by the regular progress of our own inquiries; and now turn, with a free and unfettered foot, to the study of the passions; their general nature and influence upon human actions and language; which we shall enter upon in our next lecture.

LECTURE IX.

ON THE ORIGIN, CONNEXION, AND CHARACTER OF THE PASSIONS.

We have entered upon an inquiry concerning the nature and operation of the various faculties that constitute the general furniture of the mind. These we have divided into three classes; the faculties of the understanding, the faculties of volition, and the passions or faculties of emotion. The commencement of the present series of lectures was devoted to an illustration of the first; the second we discussed in our preceding study; and we now advance to a brief analysis of the third.

In sailing over the sea of life, the passions are the gales that swell the canvass of the mental bark; they obstruct or accelerate its course; and render the voyage favourable or full of danger, in proportion as they blow steadily from a proper point, or are adverse and tempestuous. Like the wind itself, they are an engine of high importance and mighty power. Without them we cannot proceed; but with them we may be shipwrecked and lost. Reined in, therefore, and attempered, they constitute, as I have already observed, our happiness; but let loose and at random, they distract and ruin us.

> How few, beneath auspicious planet born,
> With swelling sails make good the promis'd port,
> With all their wishes freighted. YOUNG.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that the passions are not distinct agents, but mere affections or emotions, mere states or conditions of the mind, excited by an almost infinite variety of external objects and events, or internal operations and feelings. And here, the first remark that will probably occur to us is, that, derived from sources thus numerous and diversified, they must themselves form a numerous and motley host. Some of them are simple, others complex; some peculiar to certain circumstances or individuals, others general and embracing all countries and conditions; some possessing a natural tendency to promote what is good; and others what is mischievous and evil; while many of them, again, though distinguished by separate names, only differ from other passions in degree; and, hence, naturally merge into them upon a change in the scale.

It has often occurred to me, that if we were to follow up all the passions, multiplied and complicated as they are, to their radical sources, and to draw out their respective genealogies, we might easily reduce them to four—Desire, Aversion, Joy, and Sorrow. And as aversion and sorrow are only the opposites of desire and joy, and must necessarily flow from their existence in a state of things in which all we meet with is not to be desired or enjoyed, it is possible that desire and joy ought alone to be regarded as the proper parent stocks of all the rest. Let us examine them for a few minutes under this system of simplification.