

of European free states over Oriental despotism. So Ægospotamos, which finally crushed the maritime power of Athens, seems to me inferior in interest to the defeat before Syracuse, where Athens received her first fatal check, and after which she only struggled to retard her downfall. I think similarly of Zama with respect to Carthage, as compared with the Metaurus; and, on the same principle, the subsequent great battles of the Revolutionary war appear to me inferior in their importance to Valmy, which first determined the military character and career of the French Revolution.

I am aware that a little activity of imagination and a slight exercise of metaphysical ingenuity may amuse us by showing how the chain of circumstances is so linked together, that the smallest skirmish, or the slightest occurrence of any kind, that ever occurred, may be said to have been essential in its actual termination to the whole order of subsequent events. But when I speak of causes and effects, I speak of the obvious and important agency of one fact upon another, and not of remote and fancifully infinitesimal influences. I am aware that, on the other hand, the reproach of Fatalism is justly incurred by those who, like the writers of a certain school in a neighboring country, recognize in history nothing more than a series of necessary phenomena, which follow inevitably one upon the other. But when, in this work, I speak of probabilities, I speak of human probabilities only. When I speak of cause and effect, I speak of those general laws only by which we perceive the sequence of human affairs to be usually regulated, and in which we recognize emphatically the wisdom and power of the supreme Lawgiver, the design of the Designer.

MITRE COURT CHAMBERS, TEMPLE }
June 26, 1851.

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