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ESSAYS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS.

BY JOHN BROWN, M.A.

Chaplain to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Carlisle.

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MDCCCLIL
ESSAYS
ON THE
CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE
Earl of SHAFTESBURY.

I. On RIDICULE, considered as a Test of Truth.


III. On Revealed RELIGION, and CHRISTIANITY.

THE THIRD EDITION.
ERRATA.

P. 102. l. 10. For hate to despise them read hate or despise them.

P. 114. l. 23. for naturally arises read naturally arise.

P. 120. l. 25. for is in an Impropriety read is an Impropriety.

P. 122. l. 17. for defective read defective.


P. 180. l. 1. for Spectre read Spectres.

P. 210. l. 24. for Tract's read Tracks.

P. 216. l. 8. for moderate, read moderated.

P. 230. l. 28. for anticipated, read anticipating.

P. 241. l. 7. for he miscellaneous, read the miscellaneous.

P. 243. l. 5. for refined Understanding, read resigned Understanding.

P. 244. l. 18. for more powerful, read most powerful.

P. 249. l. 6. for possesteth, read pressteth.

P. 253. l. 7. for Philanthory, read Philanthropy.

P. 255. l. 1. for Objet, read Object.

P. 263. l. 2. for Track, read Track.

P. 286. l. 18. for follows, read allows.

P. 385. l. 7. and l. 9. in the Note, for Track, read Track.
To

Ralph Allen, Esq.

Sir,

Did this Address aim no further than at the common End of Dedicators, I should have been proud enough to have declined the Trouble, and You too wise to have approved this public Manner of offering it.

To praise You, were impertinent; and to tell others of my Obligations to You, would have the Appearance rather of Vanity than Gratitude.

The
Dedication.

The Truth is; I make free with Your Name on this Occasion, not so much to protect my Book, as to complete my Argument.

I have ventured to criticize the Works of a very celebrated Writer, who took it into his Head to oppose the solid Wisdom of the Gospel, by the Visions of false Philosophy. As His, at best, is but the Cause of Wit and Eloquence, all the Support he could give it was only to tell us how Plato wrote; Mine being that of Truth, and Christianity, I have the Advantage of realizing all I say, in bidding the World take Notice how You live.
In a word; I was willing to bring the Question to a short Issue; and shew, by a known Example, to what an Elevation true Christianity can exalt human Nature. Till therefore philosophic Taste can produce a parallel Effect, Religion must bear the Palm; and Christianity, like her Parent Wisdom, will be justified of her Children.

I am, SIR,

Your most obliged,

humble Servant,

JOHN BROWN.
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ESSAYS
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ON THE
Characteristics, etc.

E S S A Y I.
On Ridicule, considered as a Test of Truth.

SECTION I.

IT hath been the Fate of Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics, beyond that of most other Books, to be idolized by one Party, and detested by another. While the first regard it as a Work of perfect Excellence, as containing every Thing that can render Mankind wise and happy; the latter are disposed to rank it among the most pernicious of Writings, and brand it as one conti-
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Essay continued Heap of Fustian, Scurrility, and Falsehood.

This Circumstance hath always appeared to me a Demonstration, that Passion and Prejudice have had a greater Share than Reason, in deciding upon the Merits of this Work; which many read with Displeasure, more with Admiration, but few with impartial Judgment. 'Tis probable, the Truth lies between the two Extremes of these discordant Opinions: and that the noble Writer hath mingled Beauties and Blots, Faults and Excellencies, with a liberal and unsparing Hand.

These, so far as they relate to Religion and Morals, it is my present Intention to point out, without regard to the bigoted Censures of his Friends or Enemies: While I foresee, that some will frown upon me for allowing him any Thing, and others treat me with a contemptuous Smile for presuming to differ with him at all.

The first Thing that occurs to an unprejudiced Mind, in the Perusal of the Characteristics, is that generous Spirit of Freedom which shines throughout the whole. The noble Author every where asserts that natural Privilege of Man, which hath been
so-often denied him, of seeing with his own Eyes, and judging by his own Reason. It may possibly appear strange to some, why he should so extremely labour a Point so plain. But in Justice to his Lordship these Gentlemen must remember, or be informed, that in former Times, some well-designing Men among ourselves, from a groundless Dread of an unlimited Freedom of the Press, attempted to make a most unnatural and cruel Separation between Truth and Liberty. Having shaken off the Corruptions of Popery, and established what they thought a pure and perfect System, they unhappily stopped short in their full Career of Glory; preposterously attempting to deprive others of that common Privilege which they had so nobly exercised themselves. This mistaken Spirit seemed entirely subdued by the excellent Locke and others, about the Time of the Revolution: But at the Period, when our noble Author wrote, it not only revived, but was heightened by a terrible Accession of Bitterness and Rancour. Hence those frequent Sallies of Invective, which he throws out against this intolerant Principle, which he justly stigmatizeth as equally impolitic, irrational, and unchristian.
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'Tis the Glory of our Days, that this accursed Spirit of Persecution is at least dying away. What Pity that we cannot add, it is wholly extinguished! It is true, we most of us profess ourselves Friends to a Freedom of Inquiry, in the main. But why, in the main? Why that needless Circumstance of Hesitation? Would we embrace Error? Or do we think that Truth can suffer by the most rigid Scrutiny? On the contrary, not only the Perfection, but the very Being of Knowledge depends on the Exercise of Freedom. For, whatever some may fear from an open and unlimited Enquiry, it seems evidently the only Means vouchsafed us for the Attainment of Truth. The Abuse of it may be hurtful, but the Want of it is fatal. Such, indeed, are the clear and undoubted Principles of our Religion: Neither sure can these Declarations surprise us. For if human and political Establishments had been sacred or inviolable, where had been our Protestantism; nay, where our Christianity? Dare we then to desert or discountenance a Principle, on which not only the Purity, but the very Existence of our Religion depends? Nor is this Principle less consonant with the strictest Reason. It
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Is Falsehood only that loves and retires into Sect. Darkness. Truth delights in the Day; and demands no more than a just Light, to appear in perfect Beauty. A rigid Examination is its only Test: For Experience hath taught us, that even Obstinacy and Error can endure the Fires of Persecution: But it is genuine Truth, and that alone, which comes out pure and unchanged from the severer Tortures of Debate.

It will ever be our truest Praise therefore, to join the noble Apologist in his Encomiums on Freedom; the only permanent Basis on which Religion or Virtue can be established. Nor can we less approve his frequent Recommendations of Politeness, Cheerfulness, and Good-humour, in the Prosecution of our most important Inquiries. The morose, contemptuous, and surly Species of Composition is generally an Appendage to Bigotry, as appears in Instances innumerable, both among the mistaken Friends and Enemies of Religion. On the contrary, the amiable Qualities of Cheerfulness and Good-humour, cast a Kind of Sunshine over a Composition, and naturally engage us in Favour of the Writer. They resemble that gentle Smile that often lights up
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Up the human Countenance, the never-failing Indication of a humane Temper. How naturally then must we be disposed to listen; how open our Minds to receive Conviction, when we perceive our Opponent's Intention is benevolent? When we perceive that his Aim is not Victory, but Information: that he means not to insult, but to instruct us?

So far, out of an unfeigned Regard to Truth, it should be my Boast to take Party with the noble Writer: On the same Principle it will now be necessary to depart from him. For, not content with establishing the free Exercise of Reason, and the Way of Cheerfulness, in treating the Subjects of Religion and Morals; he revolts from the Principle on which the rational Advocates for Religion were willing to have joined him, and appeals to a new Test, the Test of Ridicule. This, in his two first Treatises, he attempts to establish as a surer Method of Conviction: And that Ridicule, which had hitherto been employed in disgracing known Falsehood, he informs us, may be successfully applied to the Investigation of unknown Truth.
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He hath gained a numerous Train of Followers in this new Opinion. It may be therefore necessary to examine its Foundations.

SECTION II.

'TIS great Pity the noble Author hath not condescended to a little more Precision in treating the Question now before us. He indulges the Gaiety of Spirit, the Freedom of Wit and Humour so far, that a Reader, who seeks Information rather than Amusement, is often at a Loss to know where his Argument, or even his Opinion, lies. This, no doubt, was in part owing to a generous Abhorrence of that Pedantry, which he takes all Occasions of exposing to Contempt. Yet a better Reason may possibly be alleged: For in recommending the Use of Ridicule, what could be more natural and proper than the Power of Ridicule itself? To draw a striking Picture of demure Folly and solemn Imposture, was a Masterpiece of Prudence: But to have argued seriously, would have destroyed his Argument: It had been a tacit Confession, that there is a deeper Foundation, on which Ridicule
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Essay on Ridicule itself must rest, he must therefore have overturned, even while he intended to establish this new Pillar, and Ground of Truth.

Here then we discover why the noble Author is so witty in Defence of Wit, and chooses to maintain the Cause of Raillery by Raillery itself. He smiles at his Adversary, who had attempted to find Coherence in his first Letter. He glories in being an Adventurer in the Way of Miscellany; where "Cuttings and Shreds of Learning, with various Fragments and Points of Wit, are drawn together and tacked in any fantastic Form. Where the Wild and Whimsical, under the Name of the Odd and Pretty, succeed in the Room of the Graceful and Beautiful: Where Justness and Accuracy of Thought are set aside, as too constraining, and of too painful an Aspect, to be endured in the agreeable and more easy Commerce of Gallantry and modern Wit." Hence with Reason he proceeds to his Conclusion, that "Grounds and Foundations are of no Moment, in a Kind of Work, which, ac-

1 Vol. iii. p. 18, 20.  
2 Ibid. p. 5, &c.
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According to modern Establishment, has properly neither Top nor Bottom, Beginning nor End.

It must be confessed, that in the Conduct of the literary Warfare, they who depend on the Regularity and Force of Arguments, have but a sorry Chance against these nimble Adventurers in the Sallies of Wit and Ridicule; these Hussars in Disputation, who confide more in their Agility, than Strength or Discipline; and by sudden Evolutions and timely Skulking, can do great Mischiefs, without receiving any. Ill qualified, indeed, is the saturnine Complexion of the dry Reasoner, to cope with this mercurial Spirit of modern Wit: The Formalist is under a double Difficulty; not only to conquer his Enemy, but to find him. Though it must be owned, the Search is a harder Task than the Victory; and more mortifying, as it ends in shewing us that this redoubted Figure of Ridicule, armed at all Points like Reason, is no other than an airy Phantom, tricked up by the Goddess of Folly, to confound formal Wisdom; as that other in the Poet, to mislead his Hero:

Vol. iii. p. 8.
Since, therefore, the noble Writer declines treating this Subject in the Way of close Argument; we must take our Chance with him upon the Terms he hath been pleased to prescribe. We must be content to go a Gleaning for his Opinions, and pick them up as they lie thinly scattered through a wide Extent of Pages.

But, however his Lordship's high Quality may exempt him from the established Forms of Argument, it were the Height of Imprudence in Writers of inferior Rank, to attempt an Imitation of his peculiar Manner. His delicate Raillery, therefore, will best be repayed by sober Reasoning. This sure, his most zealous Admirers cannot take amiss: It is the noble Author's allowed Maxim, that "a Jest, which will not bear a "serious Examination, is certainly false "Wit." Neither was he a Stranger to

\[\text{Virg. Æn. x. } 636, \text{ &c.} \]
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the methodical Species of Composition: As appears from his Enquiry concerning Virtue; where he proceeds with a Pace equally regular and majestic. Indeed should we form our Idea of him from the Attitudes in which his sorry Mimics present him to our View, we should see him labouring through a confused Mass of Words and random Half-meanings, entangled in his own Argument, and throwing himself into every unnatural and awkward Posture, to make his Way, though in vain, into Sense. But this is a very bad Picture of the noble Author: Though it be all his affected Admirers can exhibit of him in their own Productions. Deformities are easily copied: True Features and graceful Attitudes are caught by the Hand of a Master only. And in Reality, none ever knew the Value of Order and Proportion better than Lord Shaftesbury. He knew that Confusion can only tend to disgrace Truth, or disguise Falsehood. Method, indeed, may degenerate into Stiffness, but to despise Order, is the silliest Affectation. Especially when the slovenly and confused Form of the Composition pretends to the Character of Elegance,
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ESSAY on Ridicule. it becomes of all others the grossest and most contemptible Pedantry.

SECTION III.

THE divine Author of our Being having given us several different Powers, Sense, Imagination, Memory, and Reason, as the Inlets, Preservers, and Improvers of Knowledge; it may be proper here briefly to remark their respective Provinces. As the Senses are the Fountains whence we derive all our Ideas; so these are infinitely combined and associated by the Imagination: Memory preserves these Assemblages of Things: Reason compares, distinguishes, and separates them: By this Means determining their Differences, and pointing out which are real, and which fictitious.

The Passions are no more than the several Modes of Pleasure and Pain, to which the Author of Nature hath wisely subjected us, for our own and each other's Preservation.

"Love, Hope, and Joy, fair Pleasure's smiling Train;"
"Hate, Fear, and Grief, the Family of Pain."

To 
To these we may add two more of a mixed Kind, Pity and Contempt, which seem to partake of both Pain and Pleasure.

As the Senses and Imagination are the Sources of all our Ideas, it follows that they are the Sources of all our Modes of Pleasure and Pain: That is, of all our Passions. Nor is any Passion strongly excited in the Soul by mere Knowledge only, till the Imagination hath formed to itself some Kind of Picture or Representation of the Good or Evil apprehended. Thus Aristotle justly defines Fear to be a Kind of Pain arising from the Phantasy or Appearance of future Evil. Consistently with this, he again truly observes, that though all Men know they must die, yet, while Death is at a Distance, they never think of it. The same may be observed concerning the Belief of future Existence; which never sways the Conduct of Mankind, till the Imagination is strongly impressed by steady and repeated Contemplation.

As
As therefore it appears to be the Province of Sense and Imagination to present and associate Ideas, but not to mark their real Differences; and as the Passions are always excited according to the Suggestions of these two Powers; it follows, that apparent, not real Good and Evil, are universally the Objects of all our Passions. Thus the respective Objects of Joy, Fear, Anger, are apparent Good, apparent Danger, apparent Injury. Universally, whether the Object be real or fictitious, while it is apparent (that is, while the Imagination represents it as real) it will produce its relative Passion.

It is the Province of Reason alone, to correct the Passions. Imagination and Passion can never correct themselves. Every Assemblage of Ideas, every Impression made upon them, hath an Object apparently real: Therefore without the Aids of Reason, the active and separating Power, the Mind can never distinguish real from fictitious Objects. Again, as it is the Province of Reason only, thus to regulate the Senses and Imagination, and to determine when they impress a Truth, or suggest a Falsity: so it is no less the Province of the same corrective Power, to deter-
determine concerning the Modes of apparent Good and Evil, and thus to fix both our Opinions and Passions on their proper Objects.

Upon this just Dependance of Imagination and Passion on the superior and leading Faculty of Reason, the whole Weight of this Question concerning the Application and Use of Ridicule depends. But that we may obtain as wide a View as possible of our Subject, it may be proper to ascertain the Nature, Limits, and Ends of the different Kinds of literary Composition, which take their Rise from these three different Powers, as they subsist in Man. Thus we shall discover, to which of them the Way of Ridicule is to be referred, and determine how far

Some of these Truths are both finely and philosophically expressed by our great Poet in the following Passage:

But know, that in the Soul
Are many lesser Faculties, that serve
Reason as chief: Among these, Fancy next
Her Office holds: Of all external Things
Which the five watchful Senses represent,
She forms Imagination, airy Shapes,
Which Reason joining or dis-joining, frames,
All what we affirm, or what deny, and call
Our Knowledge, or Opinion.

Parad. Lost, B. v. § 100, &c.
it may, or may not, with Propriety be regarded as a Test of Truth.

Perhaps there is no Species of Writing (except only that of mere Narration) but what will fall under the Denomination of Poetry, Eloquence, or Argument. The first lays hold of the Imagination; the second, through the Imagination, seizes the Passions; the last addresseth itself to the Reason of Mankind. The immediate, essential End therefore of Poetry is to please, of Eloquence to persuade, of Argument to instruct. To this End, the Poet dwells on such Images as are beautiful; the Orator selects every Circumstance that is affecting; the Philosopher only admits what is true. But as all these, in their several Kinds of Writing address themselves to Man, who is compounded of Imagination, Passion, and Reason; so they seldom confine themselves to their respective Provinces, but lay hold of each other's Art, the more effectually to gain Admission and Success to their own. Yet still the Masters in these various Kinds of Composition, know how to keep their several Boundaries distinct; not to make unwarrantable Inroads into each other's Provinces, nor remove those Lines which Nature
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Nature hath prescribed: But so to limit their sect.

Excursions, that the Intelligent may always know what is designed, a Poem, an Oration, or an Argument.

Thus the judicious Poet, though his immediate and universal Aim is beautiful Imitation, yet in order to become more pleasing, endeavours often to be interesting, always to be rational. His Application being made to Man, should he let loose Imagination to its Random-flights, he must shock the Reason of every penetrating Observer. Hence appears the necessity of cultivating that Maxim in poetical Composition, which the two best of French Critics, Boileau and Bouchours have so much insisted on; that all poetical Beauty must be founded in Truth. Because in the unlimited Excursions of Fancy though one Faculty should approve, yet another is disgusted:

1 Would it not carry us too far from our Subject, it might perhaps be both a new and pleasing Speculation, to point out the Writers in these several Kinds, who have been most remarkably excellent or defective, with regard to this just Union of these three Species of Composition. At present it must suffice, to have hinted such a Criticism, which the Reader may easily prosecute.

* Que s'il me demande ce que c'est cet agrément et ce sel—à mon avis, il consiste principalement à ne jamais présenter au lecteur que des pensées vrais,

C Though
Though Imagination acquiesce in false Beauty, Reason will reject it with Disdain. Thus, although the primary and essential End of Poetry is to please by Imitation; yet as it is addressed to Man, Instruction makes a necessary, though an adventitious Part of its Character.

From this View of Things we may, in passing, further see the Nature, Limits, and comparative Excellence of the various Kinds of Poetry. The Descriptive holds entirely et des expressions justes. Oeuvres de Boileau, tom. i. Pref. p. 29.

Car enfin, pour vous dire un peu par ordre ce que je penfe la deflu, la verite est la premiere qualite, et comme le fondement des penfées : les plus belles font viti-euses; ou plutôt celles qui paffent pour belles, et qui semblent l’être, ne le font pas en effet, si ce fonds leur manque. Bouhours, Man. de bien pens. p. 11.

'Hence the Debate mentioned by Strabo (i.i.) between Eratosthenes, and some of the Ancients, may easily be decided. The first insisting that Pleasure, the other that Instruction, was the only End of Poetry. They were both wrong: as it appears that these two Ends must always be united in some Degree. However, Eratosthenes was nearer the Truth, as he allledged the essential End. 'Tis no bad Description, given by Mr. Dryden, and others, of the End of Poetry, that it is "to instruct, by pleasing." Though upon the whole, it throws more Weight on the Circumstance of Instruction, than the Thing will bear. Perhaps it had better been said, that it is "to please, consistently with Instruction." The Admirers of Lord S. who love pompous Declamation, may see a great deal said on this Subject, and with little Precision, in Strada’s Third Prolusion.
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Of the Imagination, and may be termed pure Poetry or Imitation; Yet, with Regard to the secondary End of Instruction, it seems to merit only the lowest Place, because it is then perfect when it satisfies the Imagination; and while it offends not Reason, or the Affections, nothing further with Regard to these Faculties, is expected from it. The Tragic, Comic, Satiric, and the Elegy, as they chiefly regard the Passions and the Heart of Man, so they draw much of their Force from the Sources of Eloquence. On the other hand, the Didactic, as it makes its chief Application to Reason, though it retains so much of the Graces of Imagination, as to merit the Name of Poetry, is principally of the logical Species. The Epic, by its great Extent, includes all these Kinds by turns, and is therefore the noblest, both in its primary and secondary Intention. Much indeed hath been occasionally asserted by several Writers, concerning the superior Dignity of the tragic Species: But this hath been more in the Way of Affirmation than Proof. Their Opinion seems to have

Thus the excellent Mr. Addison: "A perfect Tragedy is the noblest Production of human Nature." Spectator, No. 39.
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been founded on a mistaken Interpretation of Aristotle, whose supposed Authority on this Subject hath generally passed unquestioned. But whoever shall thoroughly examine the Sentiments of the grand Master, will find he only meant to assert, that the Mode of Imitation in Tragedy is more forcible, and therefore superior to that of the Epic Kind; because in the last, the Action is only told, in the former, it is visibly represented. This is the Truth. But if we consider, not the Mode of Imitation, but the Subjects imitated; if we consider the comparative Greatness of the Action which these two Kinds of Poetry can comprehend; and the moral Ends of Instruction, no less than the Variety and Beauty of Description, which constitutes the very Essence of Poetry; we shall find the Epic greatly superior, on account of the Extent and Importance of those Actions, and the Variety of Characters which it is capable of involving. Thus, for instance, such an Action as the Death of Oedipus or Cato may be more perfectly imitated (because visibly represented) in Tragedy, than in the Epos: But a much greater and more extensive Action, such as the Establishment of an Empire, with all
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all its subordinate Episodes, religious, political, and moral, cannot be comprehended or exhibited in Tragedy, while yet they may be perfectly described in the Epopeé.

So much concerning Poetry will be found to have Relation to our Subject. But as the Question concerning Ridicule will turn chiefly on the proper Subordination of Eloquence, it will be necessary to consider this Kind of Composition in a more particular Manner.

Eloquence then is no other than a Species of Poetry applied to the particular End of Persuasion. For Persuasion can only be effected by rowzing the Passions of the Soul; and these, we have seen, are only to be moved by a Force impressed on the Imagination, assuming the Appearance of Truth; which is the essential Nature of poetical Composition. Thus the Lord Verulam: "In all Persuasions that are wrought by Eloquence, and other Impression of like Nature, which paint and disguise the true Appearance of Things, the chief Recommendation unto Reason, is from the Imagination." And the judicious Strabo, consistently with this Theory, tells us, that

* De Aug. Scient. I. ii.
In fact, "the oratorical Elocution was but an Imitation of the poetical: This appeared first, and was approved: They who imitated it, took off the Measures, but still preserved all the other Parts of Poetry in their Writings: Such were Cadmus the Milesian, Phercydes, and Hecatæus. Their Followers then took something more from what was left, and at length Elocution descended into the Prose which is now among us."

Thus as the Passions must have an apparent Object of Good or Evil offered by the Imagination in order to excite them; so Eloquence must offer apparent Evidence, ere it can be received and acquiesced in: For the Mind cannot embrace known Falseness. So that every Opinion which Eloquence instills, though it be the pure Result of certain fictitious Images impressed on the Fancy, is always regarded as the Result of rational Conviction, and received by the Mind as Truth.

Hence
Hence we may perceive the just Foundation of the well-known Maxim in rhetorical Composition, *Artis est celare artem*. In every other Art, where the End is Pleasure, Instruction, or Admiration, the greater Art the Master displays, the more effectually he gains his Purpose. But where the End is Persuasion, the Discovery of his Art must defeat its Force and Design. For ere he can persuade, he must seem to apply to his Hearer's *Reason*, while, in Fact, he is working on his Imagination and Affections: Now this, once known, must defeat his Purpose; because nothing can persuade but what has the Appearance of Truth.

Hence too we may see where the true Medium lies between the too frequent *Use*, and delicate *Avoidance* of poetical Images, in Eloquence. Metaphors, Similies, bold Figures, and glowing Expressions are proper, so far as they point the Imagination to the main Subject on which the Passion is to be excited: When they begin to *amuse*, they grow absurd. And here, by the way, lies the essential Difference between the *Epic* and *Tragic* Composition. For the *Epic*, tending chiefly to Admiration and Instruction, allows a full Display of Art: But

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Essay I.

The Tragic, being of the persuasive Kind, must only regard and touch upon poetical Images in this single View, as they tend to move the Passions of the Soul. Macrobius ἡ hath collected many elegant Examples of this poetic Elocution from the Eneid: He hath ranged them in Classes, and pointed out the Fountains whence the great Poet drew his Pathos: and sure it may with Truth be affirmed, that "the Master-strokes of that divine Work are rather of the Tragic than the Epic Species."

These Remarks will enable us to discover the Impropriety of an Opinion commonly held; "that the Reason why Eloquence had such Power, and wrought such Wonders in Athens and Rome, was, because it had become the general Taste and Study of the Times: That consequently these Cities were more sensible to its Charms, and therefore more warmly affected by it." Now, though with regard to pure Poetry or strict Argument, where either Pleasure or Truth are the purposed Ends, this Reasoning might hold; yet, when applied to Eloquence, it seems to

Saturnal. l. iv. passim. See Mr. Hume's Essay on Eloquence.
be without Foundation. For where Ignorance is predominant, there any Application to the Fancy or the Passions is most likely to wear the Appearance of Reason, and therefore the most likely to persuade. As Men improve in Knowledge, such Application must proportionably lose its Force, and true Reasoning prevail. Hence it should seem, that they who make the constituent Principles of Eloquence familiar to their Imagination, must of all others be best enabled to separate Truth from its Appearances, and distinguish between Argument and Colouring. An artful Oration will indeed afford great Pleasure to one who hath applied himself to the Study of Rhetoric: Yet, not so as that he shall be persuaded by it: On the contrary, his Pleasure consists in a reflex Act of the Understanding; and arises from the very Circumstance which prevents Persuasion, a Discovery of the Master's Art.

The true Reason therefore, why Eloquence gained such mighty Power in these famed Republics was, "because the O rators addressed themselves to the People as their Judges." Here the Art triumphed: for it had not Reason to instruct, but Imagination and Passion to controul. Accordingly we
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we find, that no sooner was the popular Government destroy'd, and the supreme Power lodged in a single Hand, than Eloquence began sensibly to languish and decay: The mighty Orators, who could sway the Passions of a mixed Multitude, found their Art baffled and overthrown when opposed to the cool Determinations of cunning Ministers, or the fantastic Will of arbitrary Masters. Thus with great Judgment, though not much Honesty, the Roman Poet exhorts his Countrymen to disdain the low Accomplishments of Eloquence: He knew they belonged to a Republic:

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra —
Orabunt causas melius —
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento:
Hæ tibi erunt artes.

With the same Penetration he lays the Scene in a popular Assembly, when he gives us a Picture of Eloquence triumphant. I mean in that fine Passage where he compares Neptune filling the Noise of the Waves, to an Orator appeasing the Madness of the People:

Eneid. I. vi.

Ac


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Ac veluti magno in populo cum sēpe coorta est
Seditio, sēvītīque animīs ignobilī vulgus;
Jamque faces et saxa volant; furor arma mi-
nistrat;
Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum
quam
Conspexere, silent, arreṣtīisque auribus aṣtant:
Ille regit diētīs animōs, et pectora mulcet:
Siccūtus pelagi cecidit frāgōr*.

'Tis true, we have a supposed Instance on
Record, of the Power of TULLY's Elo-
quence, after Liberty was destroy'd, even on
the great Destroyer himself. When we
read the Oration*, we stand amazed at its
Effects: For sure there is nothing equal to
them in the Composition itself: so that it
appears an Event almost unaccountable, that
CÉSAR, who was himself an accomplished
Orator, who knew all the Windings of the
Art, and was at the same Time of the most
determined Spirit, should be so shaken on
this Occasion as to tremble, drop his Papers,
and acquit the Prisoner. Though many
have attributed this to the Force of TUL-
LY's Elocution*; it seems rather to have
been the Effect of CÉSAR's Art. We

*En. l. i. Pro Ligario. * Cafaubon, Sir W.
Temple, Mr. Hume, &c.

know
know with what unwearied Application he courted Cicero's Friendship; he saw where his Vanity and his Weakness lay: With perfect Address therefore he play'd back the Orator's Art upon himself; His Concern was feigned, and his Mercy artificial; as he knew that nothing could so effectually win Tully to his Party, as giving him the Pride of having conquered Cesar.

But whatever of Truth there may be in this Conjecture; so much is evident, that the Scene where alone Eloquence can work its mighty Effects, is that of a popular Assembly. An absolute Monarchy quencheth it at once. Nor can public Freedom itself give it any considerable Play, where the public Freedom hath any firmer Basis, than that of a mere Democracy. For where the Councils of a Nation depend on the united Reason of elected Representatives, or provident Statesmen, though the laboured Essays of Eloquence may often amuse, they will seldom determine. This seems to be the Case of our own Age and Country: And were it necessary to enlarge on this Subject, it might be made appear, that they who complain of the Decay of public Eloquence among us, assign a Cause which hath no
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no real Existence, when they attribute that Decay to a Neglect of the Art, while, in Fact, it necessarily arises from the ruling Principles of the Times, and the Nature of our Constitution.

Thus Eloquence gains its End of Persuasion by offering apparent Truth to the Imagination; as Argument gains its proper End of Conviction by offering real Truth to the Understanding. Mr. Hobbes seems to have been well aware of this Distinction. "This, says he, vix. laying Evidence before the Mind, is called teaching; the Hearer is therefore said to learn: But if there be not such Evidence, then such teaching is called Persuasion, and begets no more in the Hearer, than what is in the Speaker's bare Opinion."

Here then we perceive, that the Consequences of Eloquence, with regard to speculative Instruction and Inquiry, are of a very different Nature from those which relate to Morals and Action. To Instruction or Inquiry, every Species of Eloquence must for ever be an Enemy: For though it may lead the Mind to acquiesce in a just Opinion, yet

it leads it to acquiesce upon a false Foundation: It puts the Hearer or Reader in the Speaker's or Writer's Power: And though he be so honest as to lead him in the Path of Truth, yet still he leads him blind-fold. In this Sense, and under this Limitation, Mr. Locke's Remark is true: "We must allow that all the Art of Rhetoric, besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative Application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong Ideas, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgment, and so indeed are perfect Cheats."

But if we regard what is of more Importance to Man, than mere speculative Truth, I mean the practical Ends of human Life and moral Action; then Eloquence assumes a higher Nature: Nor is there, in this practical Sense, any necessary Connexion between moving the Passions, and misleading the Judgment. For though the Ends of Truth and Persuasion are then essentially different when the Orator strikes the Imagination with fictitious Images, in which Case Falsity becomes apparent Truth, and Eloquence the Instrument..."
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ment of Deceit; yet the Ends of Persuasion and Conviction, Opinion and Knowledge concur, when such Impressions are made on the Imagination and Passions, as consist with the Dictates of right Reason. In this Case, Eloquence comes in to the Aid of Argument, and impresses the Truths which Logic teaches, in a warmer and more effectual Manner. It paints real Good and Evil in all the glowing Colours of Imagination, and thus inflames the Heart with double Ardor to embrace the one, and reject the other.

Nay, so far is Eloquence from being the universal Instrument of practical Deceit; that on the contrary, it should seem, the moral is more natural than the immoral Application of it. Because, ere the dishonest Application can take place, Circumstances must be wrested, and Misrepresentations imposed on the Fancy, in Opposition to Truth and Reason: Whereas in the proper Application, nothing further is necessary, than to draw out and impress those Images and Analogies of Things, which really exist in Nature.

It may be further observed, that as Eloquence is of a vague, unsteady Nature, merely
merely relative to the Imaginations and Passions of Mankind; so there must be several Orders or Degrees of it, subordinate to each other in Dignity, yet each perfect in their Kind. The common End of each is Persuasion: The Means are different according to the various Capacities, Fancies, and Affections of those whom the Artist attempts to persuade. The pathetic Orator, who throws a Congregation of Enthusiasts into Tears and Groanings, would raise Affections of a very different Nature, should he attempt to proselyte an English Parliament: As on the other hand, the finest Speaker that ever commanded the House, would in vain point the Thunder of his Eloquence on a Quaker-meeting. So again, with regard to the Oratory of the Bar, at a Country Assize (for the higher Courts of Justice admit not Eloquence) it is easy to observe, what a different Tour the learned Council takes, in addressing himself to the Judge or Jury: He is well aware, that what passes with the one for Argument of Proof, would be derided by the other as idle Declamation. This Difference in the Kind, with respect to the Eloquence of the Pulpit, is no less remarkable
able in different Countries. Thus the very agreeable and sensible Voltaire observes, that "in France (where Reasoning hath little Connexion with Religion) a Sermon is a long Declamation, spoken with Rapture and Enthusiasm: That in Italy (where Taste and Vertù give a Tincture to Superstition itself) a Sermon is a Kind of devotional Comedy: That in England (where Religion submits to Reason) it is a solid Dissertation, sometimes a dry one, which is read to the Congregation without Action or Elocution." And he justly concludes, that the Discourse which raiseth a French Audience to the highest Pitch of Devotion, would throw an English one into a Fit of Laughter.

Hence too, and hence alone, we may account for a Fact, which, however seemingly improbable, is too well-known to be doubted of: "That although in France, the applauded Pulpit-Eloquence is of the
Enthusiastic, in England of the severe and rational Species; yet the Taste of these two Nations in Tragedy or Theatrical Eloquence, is mutually reversed: The English are enthusiastic; the French severe and rational." Now, though this Fact may carry the Appearance of Self-contradiction, yet on the Principle here laid down, the known Circumstances of the two Kingdoms, will explain it sufficiently. In England, a general Spirit of Reasoning and Enquiry hath extinguished the natural Enthusiasms of the human Mind in religious Subjects; while our unrestrained Warmth of Imagination, and habitual Reverence for the noble Irregularities of Shakespear, concur to make us despise the rigid Laws of the Stage: On the contrary, in France, the Severities of the Academy have utterly quenched the high Tragic Spirit; while, as yet, religious Criticism hath made but little Progress among the Subjects of the most Christian King.

In further Proof of this Principle, we may appeal to ancient Fact: To the Progress of Eloquence in Greece. There we find, it first appeared, decked in all the glowing Colours of Poetry; afterwards, in an Age
Age of more polished Manners and extensive Knowledge, when the Rhetors attempted to carry this Kind of Eloquence to a still higher Degree, they found the Times would not bear it: They were baffled in their Attempt. As succeeding Ages grew more knowing, they grew more fastidious and refined: The Orators were obliged gradually to lower and bring down Eloquence from its high Standard: Till at length it gained a Form and Character entirely new, as we find it in Xenophon's chastised Manner of Attic Elegance.

To conclude with one Proof more in favour of this Principle. It appears that these different Kinds were acknowledged sufficiently in ancient Rome; though the true Distinction between them seems not to have been thoroughly perceived, unless by Tully himself. The correct and Attic Species having gained a Number of Admirers under the Patronage of Sallust, who first encouraged it in Rome, many

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\* See the Passage quoted above from Strabo, p. 22.

were the Debates concerning the superior Force and Propriety of this or the more elevated Manner. The Patrons of the Attic Style derided CICERO, as being loose, tumid, and exuberant: On the contrary, he too had his Partizans, who despised the calm and correct Species, as void of Energy and Power. Thus by overlooking the relative Nature of Eloquence, they mutually fell into an Extreme; both forgetting that either of these Kinds might be of superior Propriety and Force, according to the Imagination, Passions, and Capacities of those to whom they should be applied. But TULLY, with a superior Sagacity, saw clearly where the true Distinction lay: For, speaking of CALVUS, a Patronizer of the Attic Manner, he says, "Hence his Eloquence gained a high Reputation among the Learned and Attentive; but among

*Constat nec Ciceroni quidem obtreptatores defuisset, quibus inflatus et tumens, nec fatis pressus, supra modum exultans, et superfluis, et parum Atticus videtur. Dialog. apud Tacit.*

*Mihi falli multum videntur, qui folos esse Atticos credunt tenues et lucidos et signifcantes, sed quadam eloquentiae frugalitate contentos, ac manum semper intra pallium continentes. Quintil.*

"the
"the Vulgar, for whom Eloquence was chiefly formed, it was of no Esteem."

Now among these several Kinds of Eloquence, Justness of Thought and Expression, striking Figures, Argument adorned with every pathetic Grace, are the Characters of the highest: Sophistry and Buffoonry, ambiguous and dishonest Hints, coarse Language, false and indecent Images, are the Characters of the lowest. Between these two Extremes, there lies a Variety of intermediate Kinds, each ascending towards the highest, in proportion as they abound with its proper Characters. For as the Imagination and Passions are then most refined and just, when they bear to the same Point with Reason; so, that Species of Eloquence is the noblest which tends to conduct them thither. On this Principle, and on this
Essay alone, we may with Propriety and Precision determine the comparative Excellence and Dignity of those who aspire to the Palm of Eloquence. On this Principle it seems to be, that a severe, but able, Judge prefers Demosthenes to Tully and on this Principle he deserves the Preference.

Thus we are at length arrived at the Point where Eloquence and Argument, Persuasion and Conviction unite; where the Orator's Art becomes subservient to the Interests of Truth, and only labours to adorn and recommend Her.

We now come to the third Species of Composition, that of Argument: Which applying solely to the Reason of Man, and to the Proof or Investigation of Truth, is of a more simple and uncompounded Nature in its Principles, and therefore needs not to be so particularly explained. For Pleasure being the primary End of Poetry, and Persuasion that of Eloquence, the real Nature of Things is often in part disguised, and compelled to bend to the Imagination

nous revenons toujours à ceux qui excellent par la beauté du dessein, qui est le vrai caractère de l'antique. Sethos, l. ii. p. 80.

* See Dr. Swift's Letter to a young Clergyman.
and the Passions: But *Truth* being the End of Argument, the varying Colours of Imagination and Passion must be drawn off; and human Reason itself bend to the real, uniform Nature of Things.

Yet on this Occasion it may be proper to remark, that the *rational Faculty* in Man cannot be comprehensive or perfect in its Operations, without a Union with a *strong Imagination*. And this, not only in the Arts of Poetry or Eloquence, but in the *severest Investigations* of Truth. For Reason alone cannot search out new Ideas, but only compare and distinguish those which Sense and Imagination present to her; and the Senses being of small Extent, Imagination is therefore the great universal Instrument of human Knowledge and human Action. Without the Aids of Imagination therefore Reason works in a contracted Sphere being destitute of Materials; unable to make the necessary Excursions into the Immensity of Nature; and wanting that Power which alone can range through the whole Extent of created Being, and bring home all the possible and apparent Analogies of Things, setting them before her discerning Eye, and submitting them to her sovereign Approbation.
bation or Dislike. From this noble Union arises that Boundless Penetration, which so far surpasseth mere Judgment: and which, according as it is exerted in Poetry, Eloquence, Philosophy, Morals, or Religion, strikes into the various and untrodden Paths of Nature and Truth; forms the distinguished Names of Homer, Shakespear, Milton, Demosthenes, Tully, Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Bayle, Pascal, Newton, Hooker, Berkley, Warburton, giving that essential Superiority and Preeminence, which hath ever been, first the Envoy, and then the Admiration of Mankind.

Thus as it appeared above, how necessary the Restraints of Reason are, to the Perfection of Works of Imagination; so here it is evident, that a full Union of Imagination is necessary to the perfect Operations of Reason. Taken singly, they are each defective: When their Powers are joined, they constitute True Genius.

But, however requisite the Force of Imagination may be, to the Perfection of Reason and the Production of true Genius, yet still Reason remains the superior and corrective Power: Therefore every Representation of Poetry or Eloquence, which
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only apply to the Fancy, and Affections, must finally be examined and decided upon, must be tried, rejected, or received, as the reasoning Faculty shall determine.

And thus Reason alone is the Detect of Falsehood, and the Test of Truth.

SECTION IV.

HE who would judge aright of the Proportions of a spacious Dome, must not creep from one Corner to another by the Help of a glimmering Taper, but rather light up a central Branch, which may illuminate the whole. By doing something like this in our Remarks on the three different Kinds of Compositions, we have enabled the intelligent Reader to see with ease: "That Wit, Raillery, and Ridicule, in every Shape they can possibly assume, are no other than so many Species of Poetry or Eloquence."

Pure Wit, when not applied to the Characters of Men, is properly a Species of Poetry. It amuses and delights the Imagination by those sudden Assemblages and pleasing Pictures of Things which it creates: and from every common Occasion can raise such
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I.

Such striking appearances, as throw the most phlegmatic tempers into a convulsion of good-humoured mirth, and undesigning laughter.

But ridicule or raillery, which is the subject of our inquiry, hath a further scope and intention. It solely regards the opinions, passions, actions, and characters of men: and may properly be denominated that species of writing which excites contempt with laughter.

Still more particularly we may observe, that as eloquence in general is but the application of poetry to the end of persuasion, so ridicule in particular is no more than the application of that particular species of poetry called wit, to the same end of persuasion. It tends to excite contempt, in the same manner as the other modes of eloquence raise love, pity, terror, rage, or hatred, in the heart of man.

Now, that contempt which certain objects raise in the mind, is a particular mode of passion. The objects of this passion are apparent falsehood, incongruity, impropriety, or turpitude of certain kinds. But as the object of every excited passion must be examined by reason ere we can determine whether
whether it be proper or improper, real or fictitious; so, every Object that excites Contempt must fall under this general Rule. Thus, before it can be determined whether our Contempt be just, Reason alone must examine Circumstances, separate Ideas, distinguish Truth from its Appearances, decide upon, restrain, and correct the Passion.

Thus Ridicule is no other than a Species of Eloquence: and accordingly we find it mentioned and expressly treated as such, by the best Writers of Antiquity. Aristotle, as in every Subject, leads the Way. "As Ridicule seems to be of some Use in pleading, it was the Opinion of Gorgias, that you ought to confound your Adversary's serious Argument by Raillery, and his Raillery by serious Argument. And he judged well." Here he first gives the Sentiments of a Sage; and then confirms them by his own Authority.

To offer all that Tully hath said upon the Subject of Ridicule, would be to transcribe a considerable Part of his second Book
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De Oratore. After having gone through several Topics of Rhetoric, he comes at length to this of Ridicule: and assigns to the elder Cesar the Task of explaining the Force and Application of this Art. In the Course of his Reasonings on this Subject, he affirms First, That Ridicule is a Branch of Eloquence. 2dly, That certain Kinds of Turpitude or Incongruity are its proper Object. 3dly, That the Orator must be temperate in the Application of it. 4thly, That its Force may consist either in Thought or Expression, but that its Perfection lies in a Union of both. And lastly, That af-

1 Est autem plane oratoris movere risum—Res saepe, quas argumentis dilui non facile est, joco, risuque dissolvit.

k Locus autem et regio quasi ridiculi, turpitudine quadam et deformitate continetur.—Nec insignis improbitas et scelere juncta, nec rursus miseria insignis agitata ridetur.—Quamobrem materies omnis ridiculorum est in istis vitius,—quæ neque odio magno, nec misericordia maxima digna sunt.

1 In quo, non modo illud præcipitur, ne quid insulse; sed etiam, si quid perridicule possis: vitandum est oratoris utrumque, ne aut scurrilis jocos sit, aut mimicus.

m Duo sunt generas facetiarum, quorum alterum retractor, alterum dictum.—Nam quod quibuscumque verbis dixeris, facetum tamen est, re continetur: quod, mutatis verbis, silem amittit, in verbis habet leporem omnem.—Maxime autem homines delectari, si quando risus conjuncte, re, verboque moveatur.
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ter all, it is but the lowest Kind of Elo-
quence."

QUINTILIAN builds chiefly on TULLY, when he treats of Ridicule in the sixth Book of his Institutions. He too considers it as a Branch of Eloquence, and gives Rules for its Efficacy and Restraint.

Now, in consequence of these Proofs, a few Observations will naturally arise with regard to Ridicule in particular, similar to those which were made in the last Section, upon Eloquence in general.

As first: Ridicule must render every Proposition it supports apparently true, ere it can be received and acquiesced in. Thus every Opinion which Ridicule instills, tho' it be the pure Result of certain Images impressed on the Imagination, by which the Passion of Contempt is excited, is always

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De Oratore, l. ii. passim.

Rerum judicis movendo, et illos tristes solvit affectus, et animum ab intentione rerum frequenter avertit: et aliquando etiam recitit, et a satietate vel a fatigatione renovat.—Habet enim, ut Cicero dicit, sedem in deformitate aliqua et turpitudine.—Rerum autem saepæ, ut dixi, maximarum momenta vertit, cum odium iramque frequentissime frangat.—Ea quæ dicit vir bonus, omnia salva dignitate ac verecundia dicet: nimium enim risus pretium est, si probitatis impedio constat. Quint. Inst. I. vi.
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regarded as the Conviction of Reason, and received by the Mind as Truth. And thus by offering apparent Truth, Ridicule gains its End of Persuasion.

Again, it may be observed, that the Consequences of Ridicule with Regard to speculative Instruction or Inquiry, are of a very different Nature from those which relate to Morals and Action. To the first it must ever be an Enemy: But to the latter it may be an Enemy or Friend according as it is fairly or dishonestly applied. It comes in to the Aid of Argument, when its Impressions on the Imagination and Passions are consistent with the real Nature of Things: When it strikes the Fancy and Affections with fictitious Images, it becomes the Instrument of Deceit.

Thus Ridicule may befriend either Truth or Falsehood; and as it is morally or immorally applied, may illustrate the one, or disguise the other. Yet it should seem, that the moral is more natural, than the immoral Application of Ridicule; inasmuch as Truth is more congenial to the Mind than Falsehood, and so the real more easily made apparent, than the fictitious Images of Things.
Ridicule, therefore, being of a vague, unsteady Nature, merely relative to the Imaginations and Passions of Mankind, there must be several Orders or Degrees of it, suited to the Fancies and Capacities of those whom the Artist attempts to influence. Among these several Kinds of Ridicule, Justness of Thought and Expression, adorned with striking Figures, is the highest: Coarse Language, Buffoonry, false and indecent Images, are the Characters of the lowest. For as the Imagination and Passions are then most refined and just, when they bear to the same Point with Reason; so, the species of Ridicule is most genuine which tends to conduct them thither.

But, however Ridicule may impress the Idea of apparent Turpitude or Falsehood on the Imagination; yet still Reason remains the superior and corrective Power. Therefore, every Representation of Ridicule, which only applies to the Fancy and Affections, must finally be examined and decided upon, must be tried, rejected, or received, as the reasoning Faculty shall determine.

And thus Ridicule can never be a Detector of Falsehood, or a Test of Truth.
IN further Confirmation of these Truths, the direct Proofs of which may possibly lie somewhat remote from common Apprehension, let us appeal to Experience; to the general Sense and Practice of Mankind. And here we shall find, that Contempt and Ridicule are always founded on preconceived Opinion, whatever be the Foundation of it, whether Reason or Imagination, Truth or Falsehood.

For in fact, do not we see every different Party and Association of Men despising and deriding each other according to their various Manner of Thought, Speech, and Action? Does not the Courtier deride the Fox-hunter, and the Fox-hunter the Courtier? What is more ridiculous to a Beau, than a Philosopher: to a Philosopher than a Beau? Drunkards are the Jest of sober Men, and sober Men of Drunkards. Physicians, Lawyers, Soldiers, Priests, and Free-thinkers, are the standing Subjects of Ridicule, to one another. Wisdom and Folly, the Virtuous and the Vile, the Learned and Ignorant, the Temperate and Debauched, all
all give and return the Jest. According to the various Impressions of Fancy and Affection, the Aspects of Things are varied; and consequently the same Objects seen under these different Lights and Attitudes, must in one Mind produce Approbation, in another Contempt.

If we examine the Conduct of political Bodies or religious Sects, we shall find it of a similar Nature. Each of these rally every other, according to the Prejudices they have imbibed in Favour of their own System. How contemptible and ridiculous are the European Forms of Government, in the Eyes of an Asiatic? And do not we on this Side the Hellespont repay them in their own Kind? Are we a whit more united among ourselves in our Ideas of the Ridiculous, when applied to Modes of Empire? What is more contemptible to an Englishman, than that slavish Submission to arbitrary Will and lawless Power, which prevails almost universally on the Continent? And they are little acquainted with the State

A Venetian was introduced to the King of Pegu. When this Prince was informed by him, that the Venetians had no King, he laughed so excessively, that he lost his Breath, and could not speak for a good while.

Recueil des Voyages, &c.
of Affairs abroad, who know not that, within the Precincts of Tyranny, English Freedom is one of the commonest Topics of Raillery and Ridicule: Every Man's judging for himself, is the Subject of the Frenchman's Drollery: One Man's judging for all, is the subject of ours: The Case is parallel with regard to religious Tenets, where People are at Liberty to speak their Thoughts. Is there any Species of Invective which the Church of Rome hath not exercised upon all who have dissent ed from its Measures? And have not the Divines of the reformed Churches been as arrant Drolles, in Vindication of their respective Systems? What Ribaldry and coarse Banter hath been thrown (nay rather, what hath not been thrown) by the Freethinkers, on Religion and Christianity? And how basely have some of our Divines prostituted their Pens in former Days, by descending to the same dirty Level? Even the Soureness of Puritanism, nay, the Sullenness of Quakerism have sometimes relaxed, and yielded themselves up to the Love of joking: And sly Hints, in demure Phrase and sober Countenance, have as plainly spoken their Contempt of those they pitied, as the loud Laughter and Grimace of
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of worldly Men, the Disdain of those they profess to hate.

But what need we wonder that a Difference of Opinion in such weighty Affairs as those of Government and Religion should inspire a mutual Contempt, when we see that any considerable Variation of Manners in the most ordinary Circumstances of Life has the same Effect? The Customs of ancient Times have been held so ridiculous by many Moderns, that honest Homer hath been branded as a Dunce, only because he hath recorded them. What Raillery hath been thrown on the venerable Bard, as well as the Hero he describes, only because he hath told us, that Patroclus acted in the Capacity of Cook for himself, and his Friend Achilles: That the Princess Nauphaca, followed by all her Maids, went down to wash the King's and Queen's Cloaths along with her own? Rebecca and her Historian have fallen under the same ignorant Censure, because she went down to draw Water: And so have the Daughters of Augustus, for spinning their Father's Cloaths,
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when he was Master of the World. Thus the undebauched Simplicity of ancient Times, becomes the Jest of modern Luxury and Folly. From the same Principle, any new Mode of Speech or Action, seen in our own Times, appears ridiculous to those who give Way to the Sallies of uninformed Contempt and Laughter. What superior Airs of Mirth and Gayety may be seen in a Club of Citizens, passing Judgment on the Scotch, the Western, or any other remote provincial Dialect? while at the other End of the Town, the Stream of Ridicule runs as strong on the Manners and Dialect of the Exchange. The least unusual Circumstance of Habit, beyond what the Fashion prescribes, is by turns so sensibly ridiculous, that one half of the Expence of Dress seems to consist in accommodating it to the Dictates and Caprice of the current Opinion. Nay, it is a just Complaint of the greatest Tragic Poet of the Age, that this indulged Spirit of Ridicule is a fundamental Obstruction to the Improvement of the French Theatre. "We dare not, says he, hazard any thing new upon the Stage, in the Presence of a People whose constant Practice
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"Practice is, to ridicule every thing that is not fashionable."

Neither is the Taste of Mankind less capricious with regard to the Methods of Ridicule, than the Objects of it. How many Sayings and Repartées are recorded from Antiquity as the Quintessence of Raillery, which among us only raise a Laugh, because they are insipid? Tully himself often attempts in vain to extort a Smile from his modern Reader. Even the sages Plautini have in great Measure loft their Poignancy. There is a certain Mode of Ridicule peculiar to every Age and Country. What a curious Contrast to each other are an Italian and a Dutch Buffoon? And I suppose the Raillery of a French and a Russian Drole are as different, as the nimble Pranks of a Monkey, from the rude Gambols of a Bear. Even the same Country hath numerous Subdivisions and under

*Nous craignons de hazader sur la scene de spectacles nouveaux devant une nation accoutumée à tourner en ridicule tout ce qui n’est pas d’Usage. Voltaire, Disc. sur la Trag.

Species of Ridicule. What is high Humour at Wapping, is rejected as nauseous in the City: What is delicate Raillery in the City, grows coarse and intolerable as you approach St. James's: And many a well meant Joke, that passeth unheeded in all these various Districts, would set an innocent Country Village in an Uproar of Laughter.

This Subject might be much enlarged on: For the Modes and Objects of Ridicule are as indefinite as the imagined Combinations of Things, But from these Examples drawn from the Conduct of Particulars, it appears no less than from the general Nature and Faculties of Man, that Ridicule hath no other Source than Imagination, Passion, Prejudice, and preconceived Opinion: And therefore can never be the Detector of Falsehood, or Test of Truth.

SECTION VI.

THE Cause might be safely rested here. Yet, to throw a still clearer Light on the Subject of our Enquiry, let us now examine what his Lordship hath advanced in Support of his new Method of Investigation. And
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And as the noble Writer hath not thought it expedient to descend often to the argumentative Way; we must make the most of what we find in him that looks like a Reason.

He tells his Friend, that "nothing is ridiculous except what is deformed; nor is any thing Proof against Raillery, except what is handsome and just:—one may defy the World to turn real Bravery and Generosity into Ridicule. A Man must be soundly ridiculous, who, with all the Wit imaginable, would go about to ridicule Wisdom, or laugh at Honesty or good Manners."

Here we have a Mixture of equivocal Language and pompous Declamation. If he means to assert, that "nothing is ridiculous, except what is apparently deformed," the Proposition is true, but foreign to the purpose: Because, through the Error of Imagination, Things apparently deformed may be really beautiful. If he means to assert, that "nothing can be made to appear ridiculous, but what is really deformed," I should be glad to know where the noble Author had conversed: In the

* Vol. i. p. 128, 129.

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It may be so: But, in our

Gothic Systems, Matters go quite otherwise: So far as common Observation reaches, it is easiest of all Things to make that appear ridiculous, which is not really deformed: And how should it be otherwise, while the human Imagination is liable to be imposed on, and capable of receiving fictitious for real Representations.

The noble Author tells us next, that "nothing is Proof against Raillery, except "what is handsome and just."—No indeed, nor that neither, at all Times. Though it be true, that nothing of the opposite Kind is proof against Raillery; yet sure it is a strange Mistake to imagine, that what is really handsome and just is always Proof against it. For, by fictitious Images impressed on the Fancy, what is really handsome and just, is often rendered apparently false and deformed; and thus becomes actually contemptible and ridiculous.

But "one may defy the World to turn "real Bravery and Generosity into Ridicule." True, my Lord; while they retain their native Appearance, and Beauty of Proportion. But alas, how easy is it to disguise them! It is but concealing, varying,
or adding a Circumstance that may strike the Fancy, and they at once assume new Shapes, new Names, and Naturess. Thus the Virtues, which, seen in a direct Light, attract our Admiration by their Beauty, when beheld through the oblique Mediums of Ridicule start up in the Forms of Ideots, Hags, and Monsters.

But the noble Writer enforces these general Appeals to Fact, by one extraordinary Instance. He tells us, "The divinest Man who had ever appeared in the Heathen World, was in the Height of witty Times, and by the wittiest of all Poets, most abominably ridiculed, in a whole Comedy writ and acted on Purpose: But so far was this from sinking his Reputation, or suppressing his Philosophy, that they each increased the more for it." It must be owned, this is an extraordinary Assertion, unless he means to affirm, that the Reputation and Philosophy of Socrates arose from his Blood, as "the Christian Sect sprung from the Blood of Martyrs." For it appears from all the Records of Antiquity, that the Wit of Aristophanes was the most formidable Enemy that ever attacked

* Vol. i. p. 31.  
* Vol. i.
the divine Philosopher: This whetted the
Rage of a misled Multitude, and dragged to
Death that Virtue which hath ever since
been the Admiration of Mankind. In this
Opinion, we have the Concurrence of the
first Writer of the present Age:* And the
Confession of another, who although of a
Turn conceited and fantastical enough, is
yet of unquestioned Credit for his Inge-
nuity and Learning. This Writer, speak-
ing of the wild Wit of an ARISTOPHANES,
tells us, that "the Comedy inscribed The
"Clouds, is an execrable Attempt to ex-
"pose one of the wisest and best of Men
"to the Fury and Contempt of a lewd
"Multitude, in which it had but too much
"Success.""

'Tis true PALMERIUS, a learned French
Critic of the last Age, had from the Num-
ber of Years between the acting The Clouds
of ARISTOPHANES, and the Death of So-
crates, pretended that ÆLIAN was mis-
taken in assigning this Play as one of the
principal Causes of his Destruction. P.
BRUMOY, who hath wrote excellently of
the Greek Theatre, after having examined

*Ded. to the Div. Leg. of Moses, p. 20.  "Letters
on Mythology, p. 262.

the
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the Affair with the utmost Candour, concludes thus: "His Account (Ælian's) " seems only defective, in that he hath not " remarked the long Interval that passed be- " tween the Representation of The Clouds, " and the Condemnation of Socrates. " But although the Comedy did not give " the finishing Stroke to Socrates; yet it " might have indisposed the Minds of the " People, since these comic Accusations be- " came very serious ones, which at length " destroyed the wisest of the Greeks." But since the noble Author seems to have adopted the other Opinion, and, as I am told, some shallow Mimics of modern Platonism have lately stolen Palmerius's Criticism, and revived this stale Pretence, of the Number of Years between the Representation of The Clouds, and the Death of Socrates; it may be necessary to transcribe the following Passage from Plato's Apology, which puts the Matter beyond all Doubt: "But it

Son recit ne semble defectueux que pour n'avoir pas marqué le long intervalle qui se passa entre la representation des Nuées, et la condamnation de Socrate. Conclusions que, bien que faç comedie n'ait pas porté le dernier coup à Socrate, elle a pu indisposer les esprits, puisque les accusations comiques devinrent des accusations tres serieux, qui perdirent enfin le plus sage des Graes. Tom. v. p. 360.
Essay on Ridicule:

Essay I.

is just, O Athenians, that I should first reply to the false Charge of my first Accusers. Because several laid their groundless Accusations against me, many years ago: whom I dread more than the Adherents of Anytus; though these too be very powerful in Persuasion: But those are still more powerful, who have possessed and sway’d you from your very In-fancy, in laying false Accusations against me. Many, indeed, have been these my Accusers, and long have they continued thus to accuse me, and persuaded and misled you at that early Age, when you were most easy of belief: While I, in the mean Time, was without one Defender. And what is worst of all, I know not so much as their very Names, except only that of the Comedian.—

What then do my Accusers say?—So-crates is criminal, in that he enquires too curiously concerning what is under the Earth, and in the Heavens, and in that he can make the worse appear the better Reason; and that he teaches these Things to others. Such then is the Ac-cusation: For such Things you saw in
"Aristophanes's Comedy, where a fictitious Socrates is carried about, affirming, that he takes Journeys through the Air, and talking much more idle Stuff of the same Nature."

Here we see, the Philosopher refers their Accusation to its original Cause: And this he positively affirms, was no other than the old impressions made against him on the
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Minds of the Athenians, by the Comedy of The Clouds.

So much for the Silencing, which is the only Conviction, of Obstinacy and Ignorance. But in Reality, it is a Matter of small Consequence, in the present Question, Whether the Ridicule of the comic Poet was in Fact destructive to the divine Philosopher or not. As it demonstrably was, it is therefore a Case in Point. However, suppose it was not; what is the Consequence? Why, only this: That dishonest

As so much stir has been made about the Case of Socrates with regard to Ridicule, it may not be amiss to shew what his Opinion of it was in general, when considered as a Test of Truth. In the fifth Book of Plato's Republic, Socrates proposes that Women should engage in all the public Affairs of Life, along with Men. This, to Glauco, appears ridiculous in some of its Circumstances. Socrates replies, "That may be: But let us go to the Merits of the Question, setting aside all Raillery, advising the Railleurs to be serious, and putting them in Mind, that the very Practice now proved in Greece (of Men appearing naked) was, not long ago, treated there with the highest Ridicule: as it is to this Day among many Barbarians." —

The following Part of this Passage I would recommend to the modern Patronizers of the Way of Ridicule.
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Ridicule failed of its desired Success, in one Instance. And how does this affect the Question, so long as Ten thousand other Instances may be alleged to the contrary, which no Man, that is not void of common Sense or common Honesty, can possibly deny?

From the Appeals to Fact, already made, may be drawn innumerable Instances of this Nature. There we see Truth, Wisdom, Virtue, Liberty, successfully disguised and derided; by this very means the Cause of Falsehood, Folly, Vice, Tyranny, maintained. If to these it were necessary to add more; we cannot perhaps in History find a more flagrant Proof of the Power of Ridicule against Virtue itself, than in that Heap of execrable Comedies, which have been the Bane and Reproach of this Kingdom thro' a Series of ninety Years. During this Period, the Generality of our comic Poets have been the unwearied Ministers of Vice: And have done her Work with so thorough an Industry, that it would be hard to find one Virtue, which they have not sacrificed at her Shrine. As Effects once established are not easily removed, so not only this, but the

See above § 5.
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Succeeding Generation will probably retain the Impressions made in the two preceding ones; when Innocence was the Sport of abandoned Villany; and the successful Adulterer decked out with all the Poet's Art, at the Expence of the ridiculed and injured Husband: When moral Virtue and Religion were made the Jest of the licentious; and female Modesty was banished, to make Way for shameless Effrontery:

The Fair fat panting at a Courtier's Play, And not a Mask went unimprov'd away: The modest Fan was lifted up no more, And Virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before.

SECTION VII.

Here then we have accumulated Proofs of the fatal Influences of Ridicule, when let loose from the Restraints of Reason.

Yet still his Lordship insists that "Truth, 'tis supposed, may bear all Lights." To which it is replied, that "Truth will indeed bear every Light, but a false one." He adds, that "one of those principal Lights or natural Mediums by which..."
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"Things are to be viewed, in order to a thorough Recognition, is Ridicule itself." This is full as wise a Method to manifest the Rectitude and Truth of Things as it would be to shew the Rectitude of a ruling Staff, by immersing one Part of it in clear Water. The Staff indeed would still continue straight, but the two Mediums, in which it lies, though both natural ones, would concur to make it appear crooked. Just so might it fare with Truth, when half shewn by the Medium of Reason, and the other half, by the Medium of Ridicule.

But the noble Writer asks us, "How can any one of the least Justness of Thought endure a Ridicule wrong placed?"—I answer, by being misled or mistaken; and then Men are ready to bear any thing. Shew me him whose Imagination never received or retained a false Impression, and I shall readily allow he can never endure a Ridicule wrong placed. But of this infallible Race I know none, except the Inhabitants of Utopia. 'Tis true, he candidly acknowledges, that "the Vulgar may swallow any fordid jest, any mere Drollery and Buffoonry." Indeed! How then

Vol. i. p. 61. 1 Ibid. p. 11. k Ibid.
Essay on Ridicule?

then can he defy the World to turn real Bravery or Generosity into Ridicule, or laugh successfully at Honesty or Good-manners? And where was the Wonder or Improbability, that the Wit of Aristophanes should incite a lewd Multitude to destroy the divine Philosopher? But then he tells us, "it must be a finer and truer Wit that takes with the Men of Sense and Breeding." This Sentence it must be owned is artful enough: Because it obliges one to make a Separation that may look like ill-natured, before one can expose its Weakness. A truer Wit indeed may be necessary to take with the Men of Sense; but these, I apprehend, may sometimes be distinguished from the Men of Breeding: For it is certain, that in most Countries the Vulgar are a much more considerable Body, than is generally imagined. Yet, although neither Reason nor the Passions gain any Advantages from high Life,

1 L'Impudence qu'il avoit de tourner en ridicule la religion, devoit etre reprimée: car une refutation serieuse ne fait pas a beaucoup pres tant de mal, que les rialeries d'un homme d'esprit. Les jeunes gens se laissent gater par ces fortes de moqueurs plus que l'on ne fçauroit dire. Bayle, art. Bion.

2 Vol. i p. 11.
it must be owned, the Imagination acquires a certain Delicacy, which the low Vulgar are generally Strangers to. The coarse Pranks of a merry Andrew that engages the Attention of a Country Fair, would make but a poor Figure at St. James's. But still it is only in the Modes, not the Objects of Ridicule, with Regard to which the Courtier differs from the Clown. The Peasant and his Lord are equally susceptible of false Impressions; equally liable to have Falsehood obtruded on them for Truth, Folly for Wisdom, Vice for Virtue: The Methods only of Ridicule, the Engines of Deceit must vary; must be accommodated to the different Views of Things and Circumstances of Life, among which they have respectively been conversant. Thus it must indeed be a finer, but by no means a truer Kind of Wit, that takes with the Men of Breeding.

The noble Writer proceeds to ask, "What Rule or Measure is there in the World, except in the considering the real Temper of Things, to find which are truly serious, and which ridiculous? And how can this be done, unless by applying the
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"The Essay, to see whether it will bear?—Yes sure, there is another Rule: The Rule of Reason: Which alone can distinguish Appearances from Realities, and fix the true Nature of Things: From whose Determinations alone, we ever can distinguish true from pretended Gravity, just from groundless Raillery. But the Way of Investigation here proposed by his Lordship, inverts the very Order and Constitution of Things: By this means Appearances take the Place of Realities: Imagination usurps the Sovereignty which belongs to Reason; and Ridicule is made the Test of what is rational, instead of Reason being made the Test of what is ridiculous.

Yet still the noble Author suspects ill Consequences: That Subjects "may be very grave and weighty in our Imagination, but "very ridiculous and impertinent in their "own Nature." True: and on the other hand, Things may appear ridiculous and impertinent in our Imagination, which are very grave and weighty in their own Nature. What then is the Consequence in either Case? Why, only this: That Imagination,

a Vol.i. p. 12.  e Ibid. p. 11.
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...ination, and therefore Ridicule which depends upon it, can never be a Test of Truth.

But his Lordship insists, that "Gravity is of the very Essence of Imposture." Yet this will do little for his Purpose, unless he can prove too, that "Imposture is of the Essence of Gravity." And if so, what will become of the Inquiry concerning Virtue? Gravity, it is true, is commonly an Attendant of Imposture: And so is Laughter, generally speaking, of Folly. With as much Reason therefore as the noble Writer infers from hence, that Gravity is Imposture, we may infer, that Laughter is Folly in Disguise. In truth, the Inference is groundless in both Cases. Though every Knave should affect Gravity, yet every grave Man is not a Knave: Though every Fool will be Laughing, yet every Man that laughs is not a Fool: We may be serious and honest, as well as merry and wise. Mirth and Gravity are both harmless Things, provided they be properly applied: And we have seen that it is the Province of Reason alone, to determine when they are so.

But after all, the Proposition, that Gravity is of the Essence of Imposture, is false.
It is only an occasional, though, indeed, a pretty close Attendant, in consequence of a Maxim long ago taken for granted, that Reason was the Test of Truth. Let once his Lordship's be generally embraced, that Ridicule is the Test of Truth, and we should soon see Buffonry as close an Attendant on Imposture, as now Gravity. The Tryal has been made; and successfully enough too, by him who has kept the Multitude in Opinion for twenty Years, that Learning and Religion are better taught in his Conventicle, than in all the Universities and Churches of Christendom put together. And sure if anything be the Essence of his Imposture, it is Buffonry.

And here let us not forget to observe, that the noble Writer often (as in the Passage last cited) confounds Mirth, Urbanity, or Good-humour, with Raillery or Ridicule: Than which, no two Things in Nature are more diametrically opposite. The first, as it ariseth solely from sudden and pleasing Resemblances impressed on the Imagination, is justly regarded by all, as the best Mediator in every Debate. The last, as it ariseth solely from Contempt, is therefore no less justly regarded by most, as an Embroiler and Incendiary.
Incendiary. He sets out with a formal Profession of proving the Efficacy of Humour and Ridicule in the Investigation of Truth: Yet, by shifting and mixing his Terms, he generally slides insensibly into mere Encomiums on Good-breeding, Cheerfulness, Urbanity, and free Enquiry; and then, from these Premises, often draws Consequences in Favour of Ridicule, as if it were an equivalent Term. This indeed keeps something like an Argument on Foot, and misleads the superficial Reader.

But the noble Author triumphs in another Observation: When speaking of modern Zealots, he tells us, that "whatever they think grave and solemn, they suppose must never be treated out of a grave and solemn Way. Though what another thinks so, they can be contented to treat otherwise: And are forward to try the Edge of Ridicule against any Opinions besides their own." Now, if this be so; how is Gravity of the Essence of Imposture, as he had before affirmed? But whatever becomes of that Proposition, the Remark is just. And whosoever he means to compliment with the Name of Zealots, whe-
ther in Religion or Freethinking, I shall not compliment as Exceptions to the Truth of it. There is scarce a Topic of Religion, either for its Dishonour or Support, that hath not been exposed to the illiberal Jokes of some Bungler in Controversy. And a much Coarser Advocate in the Cause of Ridicule', hath wrote an elaborate and most tedious Dissertation, to prove that the Way of Raillery hath been successfully applied by every Sect of Religionists and Infidels, to the Destruction of each other’s Tenets, and the Establishment of their own. How he gains his Conclusion, that an Engine which tends to fix Mankind in their preconceived Opinions, and establish so many Species of Error, is of Importance and Efficacy in the Search of Truth, may not be so easy to determine. In the mean time, in Reply to his whole Treatise, as well as to the last mentioned Remark of our noble Author, it may be sufficient to observe, that Mankind often retain their own, and oppose other’s Opinions, from an imperfect View of the Nature of Things: Their peculiar Tenets in Religion, as in other Subjects, are often founded in Imagination only: Their Ob-

Supposed to be Mr. Collins.
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Objections to those of others are often as groundless and fanciful. How natural then is it for them to communicate their Opinions on that Foundation on which they receive them? How natural, that they should throw the Colours of their own Imagination on the Tenets they oppose? That they should obtrude the like fictitious Images on others, which themselves have embraced as Truth? That they should hold forth Appearances for Realities; employ Eloquence instead of Logic; and endeavour to persuade whom they should, but cannot, convince?

It seems therefore that his Lordship's Observation (which contains the Quintessence of his Associate's Work, and which probably was the Leaven that leavened the whole Lump of Malice and Dulness) instead being favourable to Ridicule as a Test of Truth can only tend to disgrace it. For since every religious and unbelieving Sect hath alike successfully employed it in supporting their respective Tenets, and in rendering those of their Adversaries contemptible; it follows, inasmuch as Doctrines which are essentially repugnant cannot all be true, that Ridicule is one of the most power-

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ESSAY ON FULL ENGINES, BY WHICH ERROR CAN BE MAINTAINED AND ESTABLISHED.

SECTION VIII.

WE shall only mention one more of the noble Writer's Arguments in Favour of his new Test: But it is, indeed, the very Key- Stone of this visionary Arch, which he hath with such fantastic Labour thrown over the Depths of Error, in order to invite Mankind over it as a short and secure Passage to the Abode of Truth and Wisdom.

He tells us, that a new Species of Enthusiasts (French Prophets) having lately risen up among us, "We have delivered them over to the cruellest Contempt in the World. I am told for certain, that they are at this very Time the Subject of a choice Droll or Puppet-show at Bart'lmy-Fair.---And while Bart'lmy-Fair is in Possession of this Privilege, I dare stand Security to our national Church, that no Sect of Enthusiasts, no new Vendors of Prophecy or Miracles, shall ever get the Start, or put her to the Trouble of trying her Strength with them, in any Cafe."
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So far, for Peace's sake, we venture to agree with the noble Writer: But now comes a finishing Stroke indeed.

For he proceeds to congratulate the present Age, that in the Beginnings of the Reformation, when Popery had got Possession, Smithfield was used in a more tragical Way. And that "had not the Priests, as is usual, preferred the Love of Blood to all other Passions, they might, in a merrier Way, perhaps, have evaded the greatest Force of our reforming Spirit:"

And, now, for Form's sake, let us suppose the noble Author to be what he assumes, a Friend to Religion and Reformation: Under this Character, he recommends Ridicule to us, as of sovereign Use to investigate Truth, try Honesty, and unmask formal Hypocrisy and Error. To prove this Use, he tells us, what we should least have expected, that if, instead of the tragical Way of Smithfield, the Romish Priests had preferred the comic Drollery of Bart'lmey-Fair, they had perhaps gained their Point, and evaded the greatest Force of our reforming Spirit. Here the noble Writer forgets his Part, which is that of a Believer and a Pro-
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I.

Essay testant; alleging an Instance, which none but a staunch Papist could consistently apply: And in his Scarcity of Proofs for the Use of Ridicule in the Establishment of Truth, he hath offered at one, which, if a Fact, would sufficiently have evinced the Power of Ridicule in its Destruction. Here then lies the Dilemma: Let his Followers get him off as they can. If their Master be a Believer, he has reasoned ill; if a Freethinker, he has managed worse. Had he been a little more knowing in the Times he speaks of, he might have found an Instance more pertinent to his Argument, and more conformable to his Character; an Instance which shews, not what Ridicule might be supposed capable of doing, but what it actually effected. And this not to stop Reformation, but to discredit Popery. Bishop Burnet tells us, that in the Year 1542, "Plays and Interludes were a great Abuse: In them, Mock-Representations were made both of the Clergy and of the Pageantry of their Worship. The Clergy complained much of these as an Introduction to Atheism, when Things sacred were thus laughed at: And said, they that begun to laugh at Abuses, would not cease till
"till they had represented all the Mysteries of Religion as ridiculous: The graver Sort of Reformers did not approve of it: But political Men encouraged it; and thought nothing could more effectually pull down the Abuses that yet remained, than the exposing them to the Scorn of the Nation."

This curious Piece of History is remarkable; and tends no less to support our general Argument, than to recommend, what the noble Writer is pleased to sneer at, the Sobriety of our reforming Spirit. Political Men, says the Historian, whose Business, and therefore whose aim, was to persuade, encouraged the Way of Ridicule: But the graver Sort of Reformers, whose nobler Ministry, and consequently whose Purpose, was to convince, did not approve of it.

But his Lordship is so fond of his Reflection, that he pushes it still further. "I never heard (says he) that the ancient Heathens were so well advised in their ill Purpose of suppressing the Christian Religion in its first Rife, as to make use at any time of this Bart’lmy-Fair Method.

History of the Reformation, A. D. 1542.
But this I am persuaded of, that, had the Truth of the Gospel been any way surmountable, they would have bid much fairer for the silencing it, if they had chosen to bring our primitive Founders upon the Stage in a pleasanter Way, than that of Bear-Skins and Pitch-Barrels."

Was ever an Argument so unfortunately applied? --- What? --- Could nothing surmount and destroy the Truth of the Gospel, except only Ridicule, the very Test of Truth? --- And as to the Jews, he says, that "with all their Malice and Inveteracy to our Saviour and his Apostles after him, had they but taken the Fancy to act such Puppet-Shows in his Contempt, as at this Hour the Papists are acting in his Honour; I am apt to think they might possibly have done our Religion more Harm, than by all their other Ways of Severity."}

What a Favourite is that facetious Droll of Wood and Wire, the Bart'Imy-Fair Hero, with these modern Advocates for Mirth and Raillery! And indeed, not without Cause, for of him they seem to have learnt their very wittiest Practices. Who taught them to turn their Backs upon their Betters? to
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disturb the most serious Scenes, with an un-savory Joke; to be at once blind and bold, and make a Jest of the Devil? Indeed they have so well taken off his Manners, that one Description will serve them both. And whether you suppose the fine one which follows to be meant of the Original, or one of the Copies, you are equally sure you have a good Likeness.

Sed præter reliquis incedit Homuncio, rauca Voce strepens;—Pygmeum territat agmen Major, et immanem miratur turba gigantem. Hic magna fretus mole, imparibus læcertis Confìsus, gracili ja[jat convitia vulgo, Et crebro solvit (lepidum caput!) ora cachinno, Quanquam res agitur solenni seria pompa, Spernit sollicitum intractabilis ille tumultum, Et risu importunus adeò, atque omnia turbat.

But to return to our Argument. Be you well assured of this, kind Reader, that whatever Impressions are made upon a Populace in the Way of Scenery and dramatic Representation, are no more than so many Kinds of silent Eloquence and Persuasion: That Facts which ought to be proved, are always taken for granted, and Things and Persons often rendered apparently absurd, which really are not so. That the Vulgar

7 Musæ Angl. Mach. Gest. by Mr. Addison.

3 (both
(both high and low) are apt to swallow any sordid jest or buffoonry, so it be but accommodated to their preconceived opinions: That this way of ridicule, like every other, as it is fairly or dishonestly applied, will sweep away truth or falsehood without distinction: That it will confound French prophets with English reformers, and on the same false foundation establish the truths of protestantism, or the absurdities of popery. That as virtue herself cannot bear up against a torrent of ridicule, so neither can religion: That therefore christianity had indeed more to fear from the contemptuous misrepresentations, than the bitterest rage of its enemies: That christianity did in fact endure this more than fiery trial: That its divine founder was derided as well as crucified: That they who in succeeding times suffered for the faith, endured cruel mockings no less than scourgings, bonds, and imprisonment: That many a brave martyr offered up his prayers to heaven, that he might be released by death from the contempt of his enemies: And after being baited in the bear-skin, found a refuge in the faggot, or the pitch-barrel.

* Prophecy unto us, who it was that smote thee!
SECTION IX.

HOWEVER, the noble Writer's Modesty must not be forgotten. For while he might have arrogated to himself the Glory of this wondrous Discovery, he hath informed us of an ancient Sage, whose Idea of Ridicule coincided with his own. "'Twas the Saying of an ancient Sage, that Humour was the only Test of Gravity."

The Reader will probably be surprised to find that the Passage here referred to by the noble Writer, is no other than what hath been already quoted from Aristotle as a Direction to the Conduct of an Orator. 'Tis likewise remarkable, that his Lordship, in quoting the original Passage in his Margin, has, by the prudent Omission of an emphatical Expression, converted it from a particular Rule of Rhetoric into a general Maxim of Philosophy. But 'tis of all most remarkable, that in his pretended Translation, he hath entirely perverted the Sense of the Author, whose Authority he attempts to build upon.

b Vol. i. p. 74. b See above, p. 43. c The Words, τοῦ εὐσεβίου — Adversariorum — are omitted.

"As
“As Ridicule (says the great Philosopher) seems to be of some Use in Pleading; it was the Opinion of Gorgias, that you ought to confound your Adversary's serious Argument by Raillery, and his Raillery by serious Argument.” This is almost a literal Translation of the Passage. But how the noble Author could so far impose upon himself or others, as to strip it of its native Dress, and disguise it under the fantastical Appearance of a Maxim, “that Humour is the only Test of Gravity, and Gravity of Humour,”—this is not so easy to account for.

However this came to pass, 'tis certain, that the Observation, as it lies in Aristotle, is a just and a fine one: as it lies in the noble Writer's maimed Translation, it is false, if not unmeaning.

That an Orator should confound his Adversary's Raillery by serious Argument, is rational and just. By this means he tears off the false Disguises of Eloquence, and distinguisheth real from apparent Truth. That he should confound his Adversary's serious Argument by Raillery, is, if not a just, yet a legal Practice. The End of the Advocate or Orator is Persuasion only; to Truth...
Truth or Falsehood as it happens. If he hath Truth on his Side, it is likely what he will have then to do, will be to confound his Adversary's Raillery by serious Argument. If Truth be against him, he will be forced to change Weapons with his Adversary, whose serious Argument he must try to confound by Raillery. This is all the Mystery there is in the Matter: By which it appears, that whenever in this case Ridicule is opposed to reasoning, it is so far from being the Test or Support, that it is the Destruction of Truth. And the judicious Quintilian fairly confesses it, where he assigns the Cause why Ridicule is of such mighty Force in Oratory—"Quia animum ab intentione rerum frequenter avertit"—Because it draws off the Mind from attending to the real Nature of Things. Thus you see the Propriety and Beauty of the Saying of our ancient Sage, when fairly represented.

But as the noble Writer hath translated the Passage, it is a Curiosity indeed. "Humor is the only Test of Gravity, and Gravity of Humor." He applies it not to Eloquence, but Philosophy: not to Persuasion, but Conviction. And so by the Strangest Conversion in Nature, makes the
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Trier, and the Thing tried, each in their turns, become Agent and Patient to one another. But what Artist ever attempted to try the Justness of his Square or Level, by the Work which he has formed by the Assistance of those Instruments? Or was ever the Gold which hath been put to the Test, reciprocally applied to try the Touch-stone? If therefore Gravity, or Reasoning, be the Test of Humour; Humour never can be the Test of Gravity: As on the other hand, if Humour be the Test of Gravity, then Gravity can never be the Test of Humour.

Since therefore this see-saw Kind of Proof returns into itself, and consequently ends in an Absurdity; tis plain, that one half of the noble Writer's Proposition must effectually destroy the other: Let us see then, which Moiety deserves to be supported. His own Comment on the Passage will help us to determine. Which, however, he seems desirous his Reader should receive as a Part of the Saying of his ancient Sage: But whoever will turn to the Passage, as it lies in Aristotle, will find that Gorgias is entirely innocent of the whole affair.

"Gravity,
"Gravity, says his Lordship; is the Test of Humour: Because a Jest that will not bear a serious Examination, is certainly false Wit." True: here we have a rational Test established. Next he inverts the Proposition, sets it with its Head downwards, like a Traytor's Scutcheon, and now, says he, behold "Humour is the Test of Gravity." To prove this, Reason requires he should have added "Because an Argument, which can be successfully ridiculed, is certainly false Logic." But this was too hardy a Proposition to be directly advanced: He therefore contents himself with hinting, that "a Subject which will not bear Raillery is suspicious!" Now we know that Suspicion is often groundless: That what is suspected to be false, may yet be true. So that the noble Writer again suffers this new Test to slip through his Fingers, even while he is holding it up to your Admiration. But if any thing further be necessary to clear up this Point, it may be observed in short, that Gravity or Argument is the Test of Humour, because Reason marks the real Differences of Things: That Humour can never be the Test.
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Essay Test of Gravity, because Imagination can only suggest their apparent Analogies.

Thus the Sentiment of Gorgias is grossly mistaken or designedly misrepresented by the noble Writer: as it lies in Aristotle, it is rational and consistent: as it is taken up by his Lordship, it is chimerical and groundless.

It might have been difficult to assign a Reason, why the noble Writer should have attempted to establish this two-fold Method of Proof, had not he explained his Intention in another Place. He there wisely recommends the old scholastic Manner to the Clergy, as being most suitable to their Abilities and Character; The Way of Ridicule he appropriates to the Men of Taste and Breeding; declaring it ought to be kept sacred from the impure Touch of an Ecclesiastic. For as Clubs and Cudgels have long been appropriated to Porters and Footmen, while every Gentleman is ambitious to understand a Sword; so the Clumsy Way of Argumentation is only fit for Priests and Pedants, but pointed Wit is the Weapon for the Man of Fashion: This decides a Quarrel handsomely. The pretty Fellow is at your

\[d\] Vol. iii. Misc. v. c. 2. § 65, &c.
Effay on RIDICULE.

Vitals in a Moment; while the Pedant keeps labouring at it for an Hour together.

But still higher is the noble Writer's Idea of Wit and Ridicule: While he applies it not only to Conquests, but Investigation: And we must own, it was an Attempt worthy of his Genius, to establish this new and expeditious Method of Search and Conviction. In which, by the sole Application of so cheap and portable an Instrument as that of Raillery, a Gentleman might obtain the certain Knowledge of the true Proportion of Things, without the tedious and vulgar Methods of Mensuration. In the mean time, we, whom the noble Author hath so often condescended to distinguish by the honourable Title of Formalists and Pedants, finding ourselves incapable of this sublime Way of Proof, must be content to drudge on in the old and beaten Tract of Reasoning. And after all, 'tis probable this new Attempt will succeed no better than the curious Conceit of the learned Taylor in Laputa: Who being employed in making a Suit for the facetious Gulliver; disdained the vulgar Measures of his Profession, and took that Gentleman's Altitude by the Help of a Quadrant. This, it must
be acknowledged, was a Theory no less sublime than our noble Author's: Yet it failed miserably when applied to Practice: For the sagacious Traveller informs us, that, notwithstanding the Acuteness and Penetration of the Artist, his Cloaths were wretchedly ill made.

SECTION X.

We have now obviated every Thing material, that the noble Writer hath advanced in Support of his new System. But as one of his most zealous Followers hath undertaken in Form to explain and defend his Notions on this Subject, it may be proper to examine how far this Gentleman's Argument is consistent with Truth.

He tells us, that "to ask whether Ridicule be a Test of Truth, is in other Words to ask, whether that which is ridiculous can be morally true, can be just and becoming; or whether that which is just and becoming, can be ridiculous."

Here, as the Foundation of all, we see the same Kind of Ambiguity lurking, as

* See a Note on the Pleasures of Imagination, a Poem, Book iii.
was observed in the noble Writer, in the Passage already remarked on. For if by "that which is ridiculous," he means that which is really ridiculous, it is allowed this can never be morally true: But this is so far from proving Ridicule to be a Test of Truth, that it implies the contrary: It implies some further Power, which may be able to distinguish what is really ridiculous, from what is only apparently so. On the contrary, if by "that which is ridiculous," he means that which is apparently ridiculous, it may be affirmed, this may be morally true: Because Imagination and Passion often take up with Fictions instead of Realities, and can never of themselves distinguish them from each other. He tells us his Question "does not deserve a serious Answer." At least it wanted an Explanation.

The Gentleman proceeds: For it is most evident, that as in a metaphysical Proposition offered to the Understanding for its Assent, the Faculty of Reason examines the Terms of the Proposition, and finding one Idea which was supposed equal to another, to be in Fact unequal, of Consequence rejects the Proposition as

See above, p. 55.

"a False"
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'a Falsehood: So in Objects offered to the Mind for its Esteem or Applause, the Faculty of Ridicule feeling an Incongruity in the Claim, urges the Mind to reject it with Laughter and Contempt.'

Here the Faculty of Reason is excluded from the Examination of moral Truths, and a new Faculty, never before heard of, the Faculty of Ridicule, is substituted in its Place. Now when a Stranger is introduced into good Company, and sure these can be no better than the Public, it is usual not only to tell his Name, but what he is, and what his Character: This the Gentleman hath not condescended to do: 'Tis true, in a preceding Page, he tells us, that "the Sensation of Ridicule is not a bare Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of Ideas; but a Passion or Emotion of the Mind, consequential to that Perception." In another Place he expressly calls it "a gay Contempt." Now, if the Faculty of Ridicule be the same as the Sensation of Ridicule, or a gay Contempt, then by substituting the plain old Term of Contempt, instead of the Faculty of Ridicule, we shall clearly see what the above-cited Passage contains, "As in a metaphysical Proposition, the Faculty"
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"Culty of Reason examines the Terms, and rejects the Falsehood; so in Objects offered to the Mind for its Esteem and Applause, the Passion of Contempt feeling an Incongruity in the Claim, urges the Mind to reject it with Laughter and Contempt!"—Why was not honest Reason admitted to the Council, and set on the Seat of Judgment, which of right belongs to her? The Affair would then have stood thus: "As in a metaphysical Proposition, the Faculty of Reason examines the Terms, and rejects the Falsehood; so in Objects offered to the Mind for its Esteem or Applause, the same Faculty of Reason finding an Incongruity in the Claim, urges the Mind to reject it with Contempt and Laughter." This would have been Sense and Argument; but then it had not been Characteristical.

We shall now clearly discover the Distinction that is to be made on the following Passage: "And thus a double Advantage is gained: For we both detect the moral Falsehood sooner than in the Way of speculative Enquiry, and impress the Minds of Men with a stronger Sense of the Vanity..."
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 ninety and Error of its Authors.---Here it's evident, that the Design of detecting the moral Falsehood sooner than in the Way of speculative Enquiry is an absurd Attempt: But that to impress the Minds of Men with a stronger Sense of the Vanity and Error of its Authors, when Reason hath made the proper Search, is both a practicable and a rational Intention.

But it is said, continues he, that the Practice is dangerous, and may be inconsistent with the Regard we owe to Objects of real Dignity and Excellence. Yet this is but a secondary Objection: The principal one is, that the Attempt is absurd. However, the Circumstance of Danger is not without its Weight: Nor is the Gentleman's Reply at all sufficient---that the Practice fairly managed can never be dangerous. For though Men are not dishonest in obtruding false Circumstances upon us, we may be so weak as to obtrude them upon ourselves. Nay, it can hardly be otherwise, if, instead of exerting our Reason to correct the Suggestions of Fancy and Passion we give them an unlimited Range,

Ibid. p. 106.  
Ibid. 106.
and acquiesce in their partial or groundless representations, without calling in reason to decide upon their truth or falsehood. By this means we shall often "view objects of real dignity and excellence," in such shapes and colours as are foreign to their nature; and then sit down and laugh most profoundly at the phantoms of our own creating.

But still he insists, that though false circumstances be imposed upon us, yet "the sense of ridicule always judges right;" or in more vulgar terms, "the passion of contempt always judges right." Whereas, in truth it never judges at all; being equally excited by objects real or imaginary that present themselves.

Observe therefore what a number of new phrases and blind guides this of ridicule, if once admitted, would bring in upon us, and all on equal authority. For with the same reason, as the passion of contempt is styled the sense of ridicule, the passion of fear may be called the sense of danger, and anger the sense of injury. But who hath ever dreamt of exalting these passions into so many tests of the reality of their respective objects? The design must have been rejected.
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The Province of Reason alone, to correct the blind Sallies of every Passion, and fix it on its proper Object. Now, the Scheme of Ridicule is of the same Nature. It proposes the Passion of Contempt as the Test of moral Falsehood, which, from the very Terms, appears to be a Project full as wise, as to make Fear the Test of Danger, or Anger the Test of Injury.

The Gentleman proceeds next to the Case of Socrates. He owns "the So-
"ocrates of Aristophanes is as truly ri-
diculous a Character as ever was drawn:
"But it is not the Character of Socrates,
"the divine Moralist and Father of ancient
"Wisdom."—No indeed: and here lay the Wickedness of the Poet's Intention, and the Danger of his Art: in imposing Fictions for Realities on the misled Multitude; and putting a Fool's Coat on the Father of ancient Wisdom. 'Tis true, the People laughed at the ridiculous Sophist; but when the ridiculous Sophist was doomed to drink the Poison, what think you became of the Father of ancient Wisdom?

But then he tells us, that as the comic Poet introduced foreign Circumstances into the
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the Character of Socrates, and built his Sect.

Ridicule upon these; "So has the Reasoning of Spinoza made many Atheists; he has founded it indeed on Suppositions utterly false, but allow him these, and his Conclusions are unavoidably true. And if we must reject the Use of Ridicule, because, by the Imposition of false Circumstances, Things may be made to seem ridiculous, which are not so in themselves; why we ought not to reject the Use of Reason, because, by proceeding on false Principles, Conclusions will appear true which are impossible in Nature, let the vehement and obstinate Declaimers against Ridicule determine."

But why so much Indignation against Declaimers in one who writes in Defence of Ridicule, a Species of Declamation? Then as to rejecting the Use of Ridicule, a very material Distinction is to be made: As a Mode of Eloquence nobody attempts totally to reject it, while it remains under the Dominion of Reason: But as a Test of Truth, I hope the Reader hath seen sufficient Reason totally to reject it.

Neither will the Parallel by any means hold.
hold good, which the Gentleman hath attempted to draw between the Abuse of Ridicule and Reason. Because the Imagination, to which the Way of Ridicule applies, is apt to form to itself innumerable fictitious Resemblances of Things which tend to confound Truth with Falsehood: Whereas the natural Tendency of Reason is to separate these apparent Resemblances, and determine which are the real, and which the fictitious. Although therefore Spinoza hath advanced many Falsehoods in the Way of speculative Affirmation, and founded his Reasonings on these, yet still Reason will be her own Correctress, and easily discover the Cheat. But if the Imagination be impressed with false Appearances, and the Passion of Contempt strongly excited, neither the Imagination nor the Passion can ever correct themselves; but must inevitably be misled, unless Reason be called in to rectify the Mistake, and bring back the Passion to its proper Channel.

Nay, so far is the Use of Ridicule, when prior to rational Conviction, from being parallel to Reason, or co-operative with it; that, on the contrary, it hath a strong Tendency to prevent the Efforts of Reason, and to confound its Operations. It is not pretended
tended that human Reason, though the ultimate, is yet in all Cases an adequate Test of Truth: It is always fallible, often erroneous: But it would be much less erroneous, were every Mode of Eloquence, and Ridicule above all others, kept remote from its Operations; were no Passion suffered to blend itself with the Researches of the Mind. For Ridicule, working on the Imagination and Passions, disposes the Mind to receive and acquiesce in any Opinion without its proper Evidence. Hence Prejudice arises; and the Mind, which should be free to examine and weigh those real Circumstances which prove Socrates to be indeed a divine Philosopher, is drawn by the prior Suggestions of Ridicule to receive and acquiesce in those false Circumstances, which paint him as a contemptible Sophist.

To conclude: 'Tis no difficult Matter to point out the Foundation of this Gentleman's Errors concerning Ridicule. They have arisen solely from his mistaking the Passion of Contempt for a judicial Faculty: Hence all those new-fangled Expressions of—"the Faculty of Ridicule"—"the Sense of Ridicule"—and "the feeling " of the Ridiculous:" In the Use of which he
he seems to have imposed upon himself new Phrases for Realities, and Words for Things. I cannot better illustrate this Remark, than by transcribing a Passage from the incomparable Locke. — "Another great Abuse of Words is, the taking them for Things. To this Abuse Men are most subject, who confine their Thoughts to any one System, and give themselves up to the firm Belief of the Perfection of any received Hypothesis; whereby they come to be persuaded, that the Terms of that Sect are so suited to the Nature of Things, that they perfectly correspond with their real Existence. Who is there that has been bred up in the Peripatetic Philosophy, who does not think the ten Names under which are ranked the ten Predicaments, to be exactly conformable to the Nature of Things? Who is there of that School, that is not persuaded, that substantial Forms, vegetative Souls, Abhorrence of a Vacuum, intentional Species, etc. are something real? — "There is scarce any Sect in Philosophy has not a distinct Set of Terms that others understand not. But yet this Gibberish, which, in the Weakness of human Understanding, serves
"so well to palliate Men's Ignorance; and Sect.
cover their Errors, comes by familiar Use
amongst those of the same Tribe, to seem
the most important Part of Language, and
of all other the Terms the most signifi-
cant." And now to save the Trouble
of Repetition, the Reader is left to deter-
mine how far "the Faculty of Ridicule
feeling the Incongruity"—and "the Sense
of Ridicule always judging right"—may
with Propriety be placed among the learned
Gibberish above-mentioned.

'Tis strange this Gentleman should have
erred so widely in so plain a Subject; when
we consider, that he hath accidentally
thrown out a Thought, which, if pursued,
would have led him to a full View of the
Point debated: "The Sensation of Ridic-
ule is not a bare Perception of the Agree-
ment or Disagreement of Ideas; but a
Passion or Emotion of the Mind conse-
quential to that Perception."

SECTION XI.

TO return therefore to the noble Writer. As it is evident, that Ridicule cannot

k Locke on Hum. Understanding, B. iii. c. 10. § 14.

P. 103.
Essay on Ridicule.

Essay in general without Absurdity be applied as a Test of Truth; so can it least of all be admitted in examining Religious Opinions, in the Discussion of which his Lordship seems principally to recommend it. Because, "by inspiring the contending Parties with mutual Contempt, it hath a violent Tendency to destroy mutual Charity, and therefore to prevent mutual Conviction."

To illustrate this Truth, let us consider the following Instance, which seems clear and full to the Point.

There is not perhaps in any Language a bolder or stronger Ridicule, than the well-known Apologue of The Tale of a Tub. Its manifest Design is to recommend the English Church, and to disgrace the two Extremes of Popery and Puritanism. Now, if we

Some indeed have pretended otherwise. Thus Mr. Wotton, in his Reflections on Learning, says, "It is a designed Banter upon all that is esteemed sacred among Men." And the pious Author of the Independent Whig affirms it was "the sole open Attack that had been made upon Christianity since the Revolution, except the Oracles of Reason, and was not inferior in Banter and Malice, to the Attacks of Celsus, or Julian, or Porphyry, or Lucian." p. 399. Where by the Way, the Oddity of the Contrast is remarkable enough, that he should pronounce the Tale of a Tub to be a Libel on Christianity, while it is in Fact a Vindication of our Ecclesiastical Establishment; and at the same time entitle his own Book a Vindication of our Ecclesiastical Establishment, while in Fact it is a Libel on Christianity.
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consider this exquisite Piece of Railery as a Test of Truth, we shall find it impotent and vain: For the Question still recurs, whether Martin be a just Emblem of the English, Jack of the Scotch, or Peter of the Roman Church. All the Points in Debate between the several Parties are taken for granted in the Representation: And we must have Recourse to Argument, and to that alone, ere we can determine the Merits of the Question.

If we next consider this Master-piece of Wit as a Mode of Eloquence, we shall find it indeed of great Efficacy in confirming every Member of the Church of England in his own Communion, and in giving him a thorough Distaste of those of Scotland and Rome: And so far as this may be regarded as a Matter of public Utility, so far the Ridicule may be laudable.

But if we extend our Views so as to comprehend a larger Plan of moral Use; we shall find this Method of Persuasion is such as Charity can hardly approve of: For by representing the one of these Churches under the Character of Craft and Knavery, the other under that of incurable Madness, it must needs tend to inspire every Member of

H 3
Essay on Ridicule.

II.

Essay of the English Church who believes the Representation, with such Hatred of the one, and Contempt of the other, as to prevent all friendly Debate, and rational Remonstrance.

Its Effect on those who hold the Doctrines of Calvin, or of Rome, must be yet worse: Unless it can be proved, that the Way to attract the Love, and convince the Reason of Mankind, is to shew that we hate or despise them. While they reverence what we deride, 'tis plain, we cannot both view the Subject in the same Light: And though we deride what appears to us contemptible, we deride what to them appears sacred. They will therefore accuse us of misrepresenting their Opinions, and abhor us as unjust and impious.

Thus although this noted Apologue be indeed a Vindication of our English Church, yet it is such as had been better spared: Because its natural Effect is to create Prejudice, and inspire the contending Parties with mutual Distaste, Contempt, and Hatred.

But if the Way of Ridicule is thus wholly to be rejected in treating every controverted religious Subject; it will probably be asked, "Where then is it to be applied? Whether it is reasonable to calumniate and blacken "it
"it without distinction? And whether it is not Impiety, thus to vilify the Gifts of our Maker?"

And 'tis certain, that to do this, were absurd and impious. As on the other hand, there is an equal Absurdity and Impiety in confounding that Order of Things which the Creator hath established, and endeavouring to raise a blind Passion into the Throne of Reason. One Party or other in this Debate hath certainly incurred the Censure: The Censure is severe, and let it fall where it is deserved. I know none that endeavour to vilify and blacken Ridicule without Distinction, unless when it presumes to elevate itself into a Test of Truth: And then, as a Rebel to the Order and Constitution of Nature, it ought to be resolutely encountered and repelled, till it take Refuge in its own inferior Station.

The proper Use of Ridicule therefore is, "to disgrace known Falsehood:" And thus, negatively at least, "to enforce known Truth." Yet this can only be affirmed of certain Kinds of Falsehood or Incongruity, to which we seem to have appropriated the general Name of Folly: And among the several Branches of this, chiefly,
I think, to Affectation. For as every Affectation arises from a false Pretence to Praise, so a Contempt incurred tends to convince the Claimant of his Error, and thus becomes the natural Remedy to the Evil.

Much more might be said on this Head. We might run through numerous Divisions and Subdivisions of Folly: But as the Task would be both insignificant and endless, I am unwilling to trouble the Reader with such elaborate Trifles.

It seems an Observation more worthy of our Attention and Regard; that Contempt, whence Ridicule arises, being a selfish Passion, and nearly allied to Pride, if not absolutely founded on it; we ought ever to keep a strict Rein, and in general rather curb than forward its Emotions. Is there a more important Maxim in Philosophy than this, that we should gain a Habit of controlling our Imaginations and Passions by the Use of Reason? Especially those that are rather of the selfish than the benevolent Kind? That we should not suffer our Fears to sink us in Cowardice, our Joys in Weakness, our Anger in Revenge? And sure there is not a Passion that infests human Life, whose Consequences are so generally pernicious as those of
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of indulged Contempt. As the common Occurrences of Life are the Objects which afford it Nourishment, so by this means it is kept more constantly in Play, than any other Affection of the Mind: And is indeed the general Instrument by which Individuals, Families, Sects, Provinces, and Nations, are driven from a State of mutual Charity, into that of Bitterness and Dissention. We proceed from Raillery to Railing; from Contempt to Hatred. Thus if the Love of Ridicule be not in itself a Passion of the malevolent Species, it leads at least to those which are so. Add to this, that the most ignorant are generally the most contemptuous; and they the most forward to deride, who are most incapable or most unwilling to understand. Narrow Conceptions of Things lead to groundless Derision: And this Spirit of Scorn, in its Turn, as it cuts us off from all Information, confirms us in our preconceived and groundless Opinions.

This being the real Nature and Tendency of Ridicule, it cannot be worthwhile to descant much on its Application, or explore its Subserviency to the Uses of Life. For though under the severe Restrictions of Reason, it may be made a proper Instrument
ment on many Occasions, for disgracing known Folly; yet the Turn of Levity it gives the Mind, the Distaste it raises to all candid and rational information, the Spirit of Animosity it is apt to excite, the Errors in which it confirms us when its Suggestions are false, the Extremes to which it is apt to drive us, even when its Suggestions are true; all these conspire to tell us, it is rather to be wished than hoped, that its influence upon the whole can be considerable in the Service of Wisdom and Virtue.

Lord Shaftesbury himself, in many other Parts of his Book, strongly insists on the Necessity of bringing the Imagination and Passions under the Dominion of Reason. "The only Poison to Reason, says he, is Passion: for false Reasoning is soon redressed, where Passion is removed." And it is difficult to assign any Cause that will not reflect some Dishonour on the noble Writer, why he should thus strangely have attempted to privilege this Passion of Contempt from so necessary a Subjection. Let it suffice, in Conclusion, to observe, that Inconsistencies must ever rise and be persisted in, when a roving Fancy, con-

Wit and Humour, Part ii. § 1.
conducted by Spleen and Affectation, goes in quest of idle Novelties, without subjecting itself to the just Restraints of Reason.

Upon the whole: This new Design of discovering Truth by the Vague and unsteady Light of Ridicule, puts one in mind of the honest Irishman, who applied his Candle to the Sun-Dial, in order to see how the Night went.
ESSAYS
ON THE
Characteristics, etc.

ESSAY II.

SECTION I.

HAVING considered the noble Writer's two first Treatises, so far as they regard the Use of Ridicule, we now come to his Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author. And here, bating only a few accidental Passages, which will be occasionally pointed out hereafter, we shall have little more to do, than to approve and admire: The whole Dissertation being, in its general Turn, one continued
On the Motives to Virtue.

ESSAY II.

continued Instance of its Author's Knowledge and refined Taste in Books, Life, and Manners. I could dwell with Pleasure on the Beauties of this Work, if indeed they needed an Explanation: But that noble Union of Truth and Eloquence which shines through the whole, as it supersedes, so it would disgrace any Attempt of this Kind. To the Work itself therefore I recommend the Reader.

The noble Writer having thus prepared us for the Depths of Philosophy, by enjoining an unfeigned and rigorous Self-Examination; proceeds to that highest and most interesting of all Subjects, The Motives to virtuous Action. And here it will probably appear, that with a Variety of useful Truths, he hath blended several plausible Mistakes, which, when more nearly viewed, seem to be attended with a Train of very extraordinary Consequences. What he hath given us on this Subject, lies chiefly in the two Treatises, which compose his second Volume: But as he frequently refers us to the other Parts of his Writings, where he hath accidentally treated the same Points in a more explicit Manner; so the same Liberty of comparing one Passage with another,
other, will, I apprehend, be judged reasonable by the candid Reader. Thus we shall more effectually penetrate into his true Scope and Intention; and draw off, as far as may be, that Veil of Mystery, in which, for Reasons best known to himself, he hath so often wrapped his Opinions.

SECTION II.

'Tis no uncommon Circumstance in Controversy, for the Parties to engage in all the Fury of Disputation, without precisely instructing their Readers, or truly knowing themselves, the Particulars about which they differ. Hence that fruitless Parade of Argument, and those opposite Pretences to Demonstration, with which most Debates, on every Subject, have been infested. Would the contending Parties first be sure of their own Meaning (a Species of Self-Examination, which, I think, the noble Writer hath not condescended to mention) and then communicate their Sense to others in plain Terms and Simplicity of Heart, the Face of Controversy would soon be changed: And real Knowledge, instead of imaginary Conquest, would be the noble Reward of literary Toil.
On the Motives to Virtue.

In the mean time, a History of Logomachies well executed, would be no unedifying Work. And in order to open a Path to so useful an Undertaking, I will venture to give the present Section as an Introduction to it: For sure, among all the Questions which have exercised the Learned, this concerning the Motives to Virtue hath given Rise to the greatest Profusion of loose Talk and ambiguous Expression. The Argument hath been handled by several of great Name: And it might possibly be deemed Presumption to differ from any of them, had they not so widely differed among themselves. Much hath been said, and various have been their Opinions concerning our Motives to Virtue; but little hath been said in any definitive Manner, on the previous and fundamental Question, What Virtue is? By which I do not mean, what Actions are called Virtuous, for, about that, Mankind are pretty well agreed; but, what that characteristic Circumstance is, on account of which, these Actions are called virtuous. Till we have determined this with all possible Precision, we cannot determine upon what Foundation Man-
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kind can be moved to the Practice of them." Our first Inquiry therefore must be, concerning the Nature of Virtue: In the Investigation of which the Moralists of most Ages seem to have been remarkably defective.

Let us first consider what our noble Author hath said on this Subject. He tells us, "The Mind cannot be without its Eye and Ear; so as to discern Proportion, distinguish Sound, and scan each Sentiment and Thought which comes before it. It can let nothing escape its Censure. It feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable in the Affections; and finds a foul and fair, an harmonious and a dissonant, as really and truly here, as in any musical Numbers, or in the outward Forms and Representations of sensible Things. Nor can it withhold its Admiration and Extasy, its Aversion and Scorn, any more in what relates to one, than to the other of these Subjects. So that to deny the common natural Sense of a sublime and beautiful in Things, will appear an Affectation merely to any one who considers duly of this Affair."

Inquiry concerning Virtue, Part iii. § 3.

"Per-
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Perception of this Beauty he calls the moral Sense or Taste; and affirms, that Virtue consists in "a perfect Conformity of our Affections and Actions with this supreme Sense and Symmetry of Things." Or, to use his own Words, "The Nature of Virtue consists in a certain just Disposition or proportionable Affection of a rational Creature towards the moral Objects of Right and Wrong."

The next Writer I shall mention is the learned and amiable Dr. Clarke. He thinks it necessary to reject this Idea of Virtue, which the noble Writer had established; and as a surer Foundation, than what mere Affection, Sense, or Taste could produce, lays the Basis of Virtue in Reason; And insists that its true Nature lies in "a Conformity of our Actions, with certain eternal and immutable Relations and Differences of Things, That from these, which are necessarily perceived by every rational Agent, there naturally arise certain moral Obligations, which are of themselves incumbent on all, antecedent to all positive Institution, and to all Expectation of Reward or Punishment."

* Inquiry concerning Virtue, Part iii. § 1.

\footnote{Clarke's *Demonstr.* passim.}

After
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After these, comes an ingenious and candid Writer, and in opposition to both these Schemes of Moral, fixes the Nature of Virtue in "a Conformity of our Actions with Truth." He affirms, that "no Act, whether Word or Deed, of any Being, to whom moral Good and Evil are imputable, that interferes with any true Proposition, or denies any thing to be as it is, can be right. That, on the contrary, every Act is right which does not contradict Truth, but treats every thing as being what it is."

There are, besides these, several other philosophical Opinions concerning the Nature of Virtue: As, that it consists in following Nature—in avoiding all Extremes—in the Imitation of the Deity. But these are still more loose and indeterminate Expressions, if possible, than the former. If therefore the first should appear vague and ineffectual, the latter must of Course fall under an equal Censure.

Now it will appear, that all the three Definitions of Virtue, which Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Wollaston have given us, in designed Opposition to Wollaston's Rel. of Nat. § 1, passim.
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Each other, are equally defective; "Because they do not give us any more particular or determinate Ideas, than what we have from that single Word, which with so much fruitless Labour they attempt to define."

Let us first examine the noble Writer's Definition in this View. He says, that "Virtue consists in a Conformity of our Affections with our natural Sense of the Sublime and Beautiful in Things, or with the moral Objects of Right and Wrong."

--- Now, what new Idea do we gain from this pompous Definition? Have we not the same general Idea from the Word Virtue, as from the more diffused Expression of the Sublime and Beautiful of Things? And cannot we gather as much from either of these, as from the subsequent Phrase, "the moral Objects of Right and Wrong?" --- They are all general Names, relative to something which is yet unknown, and which is no more explained by the pretended Definition, than by the Word which is attempted to be defined. Indeed, when his Lordship further affirms, that to relieve the Needy, or help the Friendless, is an Instance of this Sublime and Beautiful of Things, we then obtain
obtain a more determinate Idea, with re-
gard to that particular Case. But still we
are as much as ever at a Loss for a general
Criterion or Test, by which the Virtue of our
other Actions is to be determined. To say,
therefore, that Virtue consists in acting ac-
cording to the fair, the handsome, the sub-
lime, the beautiful, the decent, the moral Ob-
jects of Right and Wrong, is really no more
than ringing Changes upon Words. We
might with equal Propriety affirm, "that
"Virtue consists in acting virtuously." This
Deficiency Mr. Wollaston clearly saw.
"They (says he) who reckon nothing to be
"(morally) good, but what they call ho-
"nestum, may denominate Actions accord-
"ing as that is, or is not, the Cause or End
"of them: But then, what is honestum?
"Something is still wanting to measure
"Things by, and to separate the honesta
"from the inhonesta."

Dr. Clarke's Definition seems not to
include any thing more precise or determi-
nate than the noble Writer's. He affirms,
that "Virtue consists in a Conformity of our
Actions with right Reason, or the eter-
nal and immutable Relations and Dif-

'Rel. of Nat. p. 22.
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Essay II.

Terences of Things.” Here then a parallel Question ariseth, “What is right Reason, and what these eternal Relations which are affirmed, by the learned Writer, to be the Test or Criterion of Virtue?” And ’tis observable, that when he comes to prove the Truth and Reality of these Relations, he is forced to resolve it into a self-evident Proposition. “These Things (faith he) are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extreme Stupidity of Mind, Corruption of Manners or Perverseness of Spirit, can possibly make any Man entertain the least Doubt concerning them.” Thus too, his ingenious Advocate, when pressed by his Adversary to declare, whether he perceives the Truth of these Relations by Proof or Intuition, confesses “they may be looked upon as self-evident.” Here then we may observe a strong Coincidence between the noble Writer’s System of Expression, and this of Dr. Clarke: For as one affirms, that the Sublime and Beautiful of Things is self-evident, so the other affirms the same of the Fit and Reasonable. And as the Sublime and

* Demonist. p. 50.
* Balguy’s Tracts, 2d Part, of Mor. Goodness, p. 10.

Beautiful
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Beautiful give us no more determinate Ideas than the Virtuous, so neither can we obtain any additional information from the Fit and Reasonable. We are equally at a Loss to know what is fit and reasonable, as to know what is virtuous: Therefore the one can never be an adequate Definition of the other. Here too Mr. Wollaston plainly saw the Want of Precision. "As to those (he faith) who make right Reason to be a Law——it is true, that whatever will bear to be tried by right Reason, is right; and that which is condemned by it, wrong:——But the Manner in which they have delivered themselves, is not yet explicit enough. It leaves Room for so many Disputes and opposite right Reasons, that nothing can be settled, while every one pretends that his Reason is right."

Now it will doubtless appear a Circumstance of Singularity that Mr. Wollaston, who saw the essential Defects of these two Definitions, should himself offer a third, which is precisely liable to the same Objection. "Virtue (faith this learned Writer) consists in a Conformity of our Actions with Truth; in treating every
thing as being what it is." Well: Be it so. Yet the question still recurs, What is moral Truth? And this demands a definition no less than Virtue, which was the thing to be defined. Had Lord Shaftesbury lived to see this new theory proposed, how naturally would he have retorted Mr. Wollaston's objection? "You, Mr. Wollaston, reckon nothing to be morally Good, but what you call Truth: And you may indeed denominate Actions, according as that is, or is not, the cause or end of them: But then, what is Truth? Something further is still wanting to measure Things by, and to separate Truth from Falsehood."—Thus too would Dr. Clarke have naturally replied: "'Tis true, that whatever will bear to be tried by Truth, is right; and that which is condemned by it, wrong: But the manner in which you have delivered yourself, is not yet explicit enough. You have rather confounded my definition, than given a new one of your own: All that you have added, is ... an impropriety of speech. I speak of the rectitude of actions, you of the truth of actions; which I call an impropriety of speech, because
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because Truth relates to Affirmations, not to Actions; to what is said, not to what is done. But supposing the Propriety of your Expression, what further Criterion have you gained? You confess, that Truth is discovered by Reason only; for you say, that to deny Things to be as they are; is the Transgression of the great Law of our Nature, the Law of Reason. If so, then Reason is as good a Guide as Truth: We can as certainly know what is right Reason, as what is Truth. If therefore my Definition is defective, your's must be so too. If mine leaves Room for so many Disputes and opposite right Reasons, that nothing can be settled, while every one pretends that his Reason is right; your's must of necessity be liable to the same Objection, must leave Room for so many Disputes, and opposite Truths; that nothing can be settled, while every one pretends that his Idea of Truth is the right one. Truth, then, can never be a better Criterion than Reason, because our Idea of Truth must always depend upon our Reason.

k Rel. of Nat. p. 15.

Thus
Thus it should seem, that our three celebrated Writers have not given the Satisfaction which might have been expected in an Affair of such philosophical Importance. Their common Attempt is to define the Nature, or fix the Criterion of Virtue: To this End, the first affirms, it consists in a Conformity of our Actions to the Fair and Handsome, the Sublime and Beautiful of Things: The Second, the Fitness, Reasons, and Relations of Things: The Third, the Truth of Things. But inasmuch as these general Terms of Beauty, Fitness, Truth, convey not any more determinate Idea, than that of Virtue, which they are brought to define; the several pretended Definitions are therefore inadequate and defective.¹

¹Let it be observed once for all, that the Definitions here cenured as defective, are little more than direct Transcripts of what the old Greek Philosophers, and Tully after them, have said on the same Subject. To shew how generally this Kind of Language infects the Writers on Morality, we need only transcribe the subsequent Passage from a Follower of the noble Writer: "We need not therefore be at a Loss, said he, for a Description of the sovereign Good—We may call it Rectitude of Conduct.—If that be too contracted, we may enlarge, and say, 'tis—to live perpetually selecting and rejecting according to the Standard of our Being. If we are for still different Views, we may say, 'tis—to live in the Discharge of Moral Offices—to
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What then is Virtue? Let us consider its true Nature in the following Section.

SECTION III.

There are few among Mankind, who have not been often struck with Admiration at the Sight of that Variety of Colours and Magnificence of Form, which appear in an Evening Rainbow. The un instructed in Philosophy consider that splendid Object, not as dependent on any other, but as being possessed of a self-given and original Beauty. But he who is led to know, that its Place and Appearance always varies with the Situation of the Sun, that when the latter is in his Meridian, the former becomes an inconsiderable Curve skirting the Horizon; that as the Sun descends, the Rainbow rises; till at the Time of his Setting, it encompasses the Heavens with a glorious Circle; yet dies away when he disappears; the Inquirer is then convinced, that this gay Meteor did but shine

"live according to Nature—To live according to Virtue"

"To live according to just Experience of those Things which happen around us," Three Treatises by J. H. Treat. 3d, p. 27.

with
With a borrowed Splendor, derived from the Influence of that mighty Luminary.

Thus, in like manner, though the Beauty, Fitness, Truth, or Virtue, of all those Actions which we term morally Good, seem at first View to reside in the several Actions, in an original and independent Manner; yet on a nearer Scrutiny we shall find, that, properly speaking, their Nature ariseth from their Ends and Consequences; that as these vary, the Nature of the several Actions varies with them; that from these alone, Actions gain their Splendor, are denominated morally Good, and give us the Ideas of Beauty, Fitness, Truth, or Virtue.

The first Proofs in Support of this Opinion shall be drawn from those very Writers who most zealously oppose it. And here 'tis first remarkable, that " while they attempt to fix their several Criteria of absolute independent Beauty, Fitness, and Truth ; they are obliged to admit Exceptions, which effectually destroy what they design to establish." The following Instance, from one of these celebrated Writers, is equally applicable to the other two.
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Mr. Wollaston speaks in the following manner: "To talk to a Post, or otherwise treat it as if it was a Man would surely be reckoned an Absurdity, if not Distraction. Why? Because this is to treat it as being what it is not. And why should not the Converse be reckoned as bad; that is, to treat a Man as a Post? As if he had no Sense, and felt not Injuries which he doth feel; as if to him Pain and Sorrow were not Pain; Happiness not Happiness." Now, you see that on his Scheme of absolute irrelative Truth, the Absurdity of talking to a Post is precisely of the same Nature with that of injuring a Man: For in both Cases, we treat the Post and the Man, as being what they are not. Consequently, on this Philosophy, if it be morally Evil, to injure a Man, 'tis likewise morally Evil to talk to a Post. Not that I suppose Mr. Wollaston would have maintained this Consequence. He knew that the first of these Absurdities would only deserve the Name of Folly; the latter, of a Crime. As therefore he allows that Truth is equally violated in either Case; as there is something highly immoral.

Rel. of Nat. p. 15.
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imoral in the one, and nothing immoral in the other, here is an Exception which over-turns his Principle: which proves that the Morality or Immorality of Actions depends on something distinct from mere abstract, irrelative Truth.

The same Exception must be admitted on Dr. Clarke's System of Expression. For sure, 'tis neither fit nor reasonable, nor agreeable to the Relations of Things, that a Man should talk to a Post. Yet, although it be admitted as irrational and absurd, I do not imagine, any of Dr. Clarke's Defenders would say it was immoral. So again, with regard to Lord Shaftesbury, 'tis clear there can be nothing of the Sublime or Beautiful in this Action of talking to a Post: On the contrary, there is (to use his own Manner of Expression) an apparent Indecency, Impropriety, and Dissonance in it. Yet, although his Admirers might justly denominate it incongruous, they would surely be far from branding it as vile. Here then the same Exception again takes place, which demonstrates, that Virtue cannot consist either in abstract Fitness or Beauty; but that something further is required in order to constitute its Nature.
Possibly therefore, the Patrons of these several Theories may alledge, that Actions which relate to inanimate Beings only, can properly be called no more than naturally beautiful, fit, or true: But that moral Fitness, Beauty, or Truth, can only arise from such Actions as relate to Beings that are sensible or intelligent. Mr. Balguy expressly makes this Exception: He affirms, that “moral Actions are such as are knowledgeably directed towards some Object intelligent or sensible”.

And so far indeed this Refinement approaches towards the Truth, as it excludes all inanimate Things from being the Objects of moral Good and Evil. Yet even this Idea of moral Beauty, Fitness, or Truth, is highly indeterminate and defective: Because innumerable Instances may be given, of Actions directed towards Objects sensible and intelligent, some of which Actions are manifestly becoming, fit, or true; others as manifestly incongruous, irrational, and false; yet none of them, in any degree, virtuous or vicious, meritorious or immoral. Thus to speak to a Man in a Language he understands, is an Action becoming, fit, or true;
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'tis treating him according to the Order, Relations, and Truth of Things; 'tis treating him according to what he is. On the contrary, to speak to him in a Language he understands not, is an Action neither becoming, fit, nor true; 'tis treating him according to what he is not; 'tis treating him as a Poet. But although the first of these Actions be undeniably becoming, fit, or true, who will call it Virtue? And though the latter be undeniably incongruous, irrational, and false, who will call it Vice? Yet both these Actions are directed towards a Being that is sensible and intelligent. It follows therefore, that an Action is not either morally Good or Evil, merely because it is conformable to the Beauty, Fitness, or Truth of Things, even though it be directed towards an Object both sensible and intelligent; but that something still further, some more distinguishing and characteristic Circumstances is necessary, in order to fix its real Essence.

What this peculiar Circumstance may be, we come now to inquire. And the first Lights in this Inquiry shall be borrowed from these very celebrated Writers, whom we have here ventured to oppose. For
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For such is the Force and Energy of Truth, that, while they are attempting to involve her in a Cloud of Metaphysics, she breaks through the mystic Veil they had prepared and woven for her with so much Art, and diffuseth a Stream of genuine Lustre, which the most obdurate Prejudice can hardly withstand.

And first, though the noble Writer everywhere attempts to fix an original, independent, moral Beauty of Action, to which every thing is to be referred, and which itself is not to be referred to any thing further: Yet when he comes to an Enumeration of those particular Actions, which may be called morally Beautiful, he always singles out such as have a direct and necessary Tendency to the Happiness of Mankind. Thus he talks of the Notion of a public Interest, as necessary towards a proper Idea of Virtue: He speaks of public Affection in the same Manner; and reckons Generosity, Kindness, and Compassion, as the Qualities which alone can render Mankind truly virtuous. So again, when he fixes the Bounds of the social Affections, he evidently refers

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If Kindness or Love of the most natural Sort be immoderate, it is undoubtedly vicious. For thus over-great Tenderness destroys the Effect of Love; and excessive Pity renders us incapable of giving Success. When he fixes the proper Degrees of the private Affections, he draws his Proof from this one Point, "that by having the Self-Passions too intense or strong, a Creature becomes miserable." Lastly, when he draws a Catalogue of such Affections, as are most opposite to Beauty and moral Good, he selects "Malice, Hatred of Society—Tyranny—Anger—Revenge—Treachery—Ingratitude." In all these Instances, the Reference to human Happiness is so particular and strong, that from these alone an unprejudiced Mind may be convinced, that the Production of human Happiness is the great universal Fountain, whence our Actions derive their moral Beauty.

Thus again, though the excellent Dr. Clarke attempts to fix the Nature and Essence of Virtue in certain Differences, Relations, and Fitnesses of Things, to which
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our Actions ought ultimately to be referred; yet in enumerating the several Actions which he denominates morally Good, he mentions none but what evidently promote the same great End, "the Happiness of Man." He justly speaks of the Welfare of the Whole, as being the necessary and most important Consequence of virtuous Action. He tells us, "That it is more fit that God should regard "the Good of the whole Creation, than that "he should make the Whole continually "miserable: That all Men should endeav "our to promote the universal Good and "Welfare of all; than that all Men should "be continually contriving the Ruin and "Destruction of all." Here again, the Reference is so direct and strong to the Happiness of Mankind, that even from the Instances alleged by the worthy Author, it appears, that a Conformity of our Actions to this great End, is the very Essence of moral Rectitude.

Mr. Wollaston is no less explicit in this Particular: For in every Instance he brings, the Happiness of Man is the single End to which his Rule of Truth verges in an unvaried Manner. Thus in the Passage

Demonst. p. 45, &c.

already
already cited, though he considers the talking to a Post as an Absurdity, he is far from condemning it as an immoral Action: But in the same Paragraph, when he comes to give an Instance of the Violation of moral Truth, he immediately has Recourse to Man; and not only so, but to the Happiness of Man. "Why (faith he) should not the "Converse be reckoned as bad; that is, to "treat a Man as a Post, as if he had no "Sense, and felt not Injuries, which he "doth feel; as if to him Pain and Sorrow "were not Pain; Happiness not Happiness?" At other Times he affirms, that "the Importance of the Truths on the one and the "other Side should be diligently compared." And I would gladly know, how one Truth can be more important than another, unless upon this Principle, and in reference to the Production of Happiness. Himself indeed confirms this Interpretation, when he speaks as follows: "The Truth violated "in the former Case was, B had a Property "in that which gave him such a Degree of "Happiness: That violated in the latter was, "B had a Propriety in that which gave him "a Happiness vastly superior to the other: " Rel. of Nat. p 19. "The
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"The Violation therefore in the latter Case was upon this Account a vastly greater Violation than in the former."

These Evidences may seem sufficient. But that all possible Satisfaction may be given in a Circumstance which is of the greatest Weight in the present Question, these further Observations may be added.

As therefore these celebrated Writers give no Instances of moral Beauty, Fitness, or Truth, but what finally relate to the Happiness of Man; so, if we appeal to the common Sense of Mankind, we shall see, that the Idea of Virtue hath never been universally affixed to any Action or Affection of the Mind, unless where this Tendency to produce Happiness was at least apparent. What are all the black Catalogues of Vice or moral Turpitude, which we read in History, or find in the Circle of our own Experience, what are they but so many Instances of Misery produced? And what are the fair and amiable Achievements of Legislators, Patriots, and Sages, renowned in Story, what but so many Efforts to raise Mankind from Misery, and establish the public Happiness on a sure Foundation?

* Rel. of Nat. p. 21.

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The first are vicious, immoral, deformed, because there we see Mankind afflicted, or destroyed: The latter are virtuous, right, beautiful, because here we see Mankind preserved and assisted.

But that Happiness is the last Criterion or Test, to which the moral Beauty, Truth, or Rectitude of our Affections is to be referred, the two following Circumstances demonstrate: First "those very Affections and Actions, which, in the ordinary Course of Things, are approved as virtuous, do change their Nature, and become vicious in the strictest Sense, when they contradict this fundamental Law, of the greatest public Happiness." Thus, although in general it is a Parent's Duty to prefer a Child's Welfare to that of another Person, yet, if this natural and just Affection gain such Strength, as to tempt the Parent to violate the Public for his Child's particular Welfare; what was before a Duty, by this becomes immoderate and criminal. This the noble Writer hath allowed: "If Kindness or Love of the most natural Sort be immoderate, it is undoubtedly vicious." And hence, he says, "the Excess of motherly

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"Love
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Love is owned to be a vicious Fondness. The same Variation takes place with regard to every other Relation between Man and Man. Insomuch, that the superior Regards which we owe to our Family, Friends, Fellow-Citizens, and Countrymen ---Regards which, in their proper Degree, aspire to the amiable and high Names of domestic Love, Friendship, Patriotism, ---when once they desert and violate the grand Principle of universal Happiness, become a vicious Fondness, a mean and odious Partiality, justly stigmatized by all, as ignominious and unworthy.

Secondly, with such uncontrouled Authority does this great Principle command us; that Actions, which are in their own Nature most shocking to every humane Affection, lose at once their moral Deformity, when they become subservient to the general Welfare; and assume both the Name and the Nature of Virtue.

For what is more contrary to every gentle and kind Affection, that dwells in the human Breast, than to shed the Blood, or destroy the Life of Man? Yet the ruling Principle above-mentioned, can reconcile us

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Essay even to this. And when the Necessity of public Example compels us to make a Sacrifice of this Kind; though we may lament the Occasion, we cannot condemn the Fact: So far are we from branding it as Murder, that we approve it as Justice: and always defend it on this great Principle alone, that it was necessary for the public Good.

Thus it appears, that those Actions which we denominate Virtuous, Beautiful, Fit, or True, have not any absolute and independent, but a relative and reflected Beauty: And that their Tendency to produce Happiness is the only Source from whence they derive their Lustre. Hence therefore we may obtain a just and adequate Definition of Virtue: Which is no other than "the Conformity of our Affections with the

* The Gentlemen above examined seem to have mistaken the Attributes of Virtue for its Essence. Virtue is procuring Happiness: To procure Happiness is beautiful, reasonable, true; these are the Qualities or Attributes of the Action: But the Action itself, or its Essence, is procuring Happiness.

The Reader who is curious to examine further into this Subject, may consult the Prelim. Dissert. to Dr. Law's Translation of King's Origin of Evil: Together with several Passages in the Translator's Notes, where he will find Sense and Metaphysics united in a very eminent and extraordinary Degree.
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"public Good: " Or " the voluntary Pro-

duction of the greatest Happiness."

SECTION IV.

It may possibly seem strange that so much has been thought necessary to be op-
posed to these metaphysical Refinements con-
cerning the Nature of Virtue: But in Re-
ality, 'tis a Point of the utmost Consequence: For these Refinements have given Rise to a
plausible Objection, which hath been re-
tailed in a popular Manner by a late wordy Writer; whose least Merit it is to have sup-
plied our modish Coffee-house Philosophers
with such a Variety of fashionable Topics,
that they have never felt the least Want of
that antiquated Assistance derived from
Knowledge, Parts, and Learning.

This Gentleman taking Advantage of
these metaphysical Refinements, and parti-
cularly of the noble Writer's imaginary
Scheme of absolute, irrelative Beauty, " the
"Hunting after which (he elegantly af-
"firms) is not much better than a wild
"Goose Chase"; attempts from hence to
demonstrate, for the Benefit of his Country,

that we are utterly mistaken, when we look upon Virtue and Vice as permanent Realities, that must ever be the same in all Countries and all Ages: And thus he prosecutes his Argument.

The Worth or Excellence of everything he says, varies according to Fancy or Opinion. "Even in human Creatures, what is beautiful in one Country, is not so in another. -- Three hundred Years ago, Men were shaved as closely as they are now; since that, they have wore Beards. -- How mean and comical a Man looks, that is otherwise well-dressed, in a narrow-brimmed Hat, when everybody wears broad ones? And again, how monstrous is a very great Hat, when the other Extreme has been in Fashion for a considerable Time? -- The many Ways of laying out a Garden judiciously are almost innumerable; and what is called Beautiful in them, varies according to the different Taste of Nations and Ages." Thus capricious and uncertain, he tells us, are our Ideas of natural Beauty; and these he brings home to the Point of Morals: "In Morals there is no greater Certainty: Plurality of

\[ e \text{ Fable of the Bees, p. 372.} \]
\[ d \text{ P. 376.} \]
\[ " \text{ Wives.} \]
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Wives is odious among Christians, and all the Wit and Learning of a great Genius in Defence of it, has been rejected with Contempt. But Polygamy is not shocking to a Mahometan. What Men have learnt from their Infancy enslaves them, and the Force of Custom warps Nature, and at the same time imitates her in such a Manner, that it is often difficult to know, which of them we are influenced by. In the East formerly, Sisters married Brothers, and it was meritorious for a Man to marry his Mother. Such Aliances are abominable: But it is certain, that whatever Horror we conceive at the Thoughts of them, there is nothing in Nature repugnant against them, but what is built upon Mode and Custom. A religious Mahometan may receive as great an Aversion against Wine. Hence, with great Stretch of Reasoning, he concludes, that Virtue and Vice are not permanent Realities, but vary as other Fashions, and are subject to no other Law, than that of Fancy and Opinion.

And so far indeed, this Gentleman seems to have argued justly, while he contends that

Fable of the Bees, p. 377, 379.
that mere Approbation and Dislike, the mere Idea of Beauty and Deformity, Truth or Restitude, without Reference to some further End, can never constitute a real or permanent Foundation of Vice or Virtue. For, as he hath observed, there have indeed been considerable Differences of Opinion upon some Kinds of moral Beauty and Deformity, in the different Nations and Ages of the World: And each Age and Nation hath ever been alike positive in asserting the Propriety of its own. Therefore, unless we have some further Test, some other distinguishing and characteristic Circumstance to refer to, besides that of mere Approbation and Dislike, how shall we ever know, which of these anomalous Opinions are right or wrong? If we have nothing further to appeal to, than the mere Propriety of Taste; though each may be thoroughly satisfied of the Justness of his own; yet he ought in Reason to allow the same Right of Choice to the rest of Mankind in every Age and Nation: And thus indeed, moral Beauty and Deformity, Virtue and Vice, could have no other Law, than that of Fancy and Opinion.

But when the great End of public Happiness is ultimately referred to, as, the one;
uniform Circumstance that constitutes the Rectitude of human Actions; then indeed Virtue and Vice assume a more real and permanent Nature: The common Sense, nay, the very necessities of Mankind, will urge them to make an unvaried and just Distinction: For Happiness and Misery make too strong an Appeal to all the Faculties of Man, to be borne down by the Caprice of Fancy and Opinion. That it was either an accidental or a designed Inattention to the great Principle of Happiness, that gave this coarse Writer an Occasion to call in question the permanent Reality of Vice and Virtue, the following Considerations may sufficiently convince us.

Should any one ask, whether Health and Sickness are two different Things, no doubt we should answer in the Affirmative: And would surely suspect any Man's Sincerity, who should tell us, that what was accounted Health in one Age or Nation, was accounted Sickness in another. There are likewise such Things as wholesome Food and Poisons: Nor would we entertain a much better Opinion of him who should affirm that all depends upon Fancy; that Bread or Milk are nourishing or destructive,
that Arsenic and Sublimate are wholesome or poisonous, as Imagination and Opinion dictate. On the contrary, we know their Nature with respect to Man, is invariable: The one, universally wholesome, the other, poisonous. Further: we know there have been Debates among Physicians, about Regimen and Diet: That some have maintained the Wholesomeness of animal, others of vegetable Food: Some recommended the Drinking of Water, others of Wine. Yet none was ever so weak as to conclude from these different Opinions about wholesome Diet, that the nourishing Qualities of Bread or the noxious ones of Arsenic, were not permanent Realities with regard to Man; or, that the first could be made poisonous, the latter, wholesome, by Dint of Fancy and Opinion.

Now, the Case we are debating is exactly parallel. For sure, the Happiness and Misery of Mankind are Things as distinct as Health and Sickness: Whence it follows, that certain Actions, under the same Circumstances, must universally produce Happiness or Misery, as naturally as Food produceth Health, or Poison Sickness and Death. We have already seen, that what-
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ever tends to the Good of all, is, by the consent of all, denominated Virtue; that whatever is contrary to this great End, is universally branded as Vice; in the same Manner, as whatever nourishes the Body is called Food; whatever destroys it, Poison. Accordingly, we find the Agreement among Mankind as uniform on the one Subject, as on the other. All Ages and Nations having without Exception or Variance maintained, that Humanity, Fidelity, Truth, Temperance, and mutual Benevolence, do as naturally produce Happiness, as Food gives Health to the Body: That Cruelty, Treachery, Lying, Intemperance, Inhumanity, Adultery, Murder, do as naturally give Rise to Misery, as Poison brings on Sickness and Death.

But hath not this Author given such Instances as prove, that what is detested as Vice in one Country, is applauded as Virtue in another? That Polygamy and incestuous Marriages have been in some Nations reputed lawful, in others meritorious? And if one Virtue or Vice be imaginary or variable, doth it not clearly follow that all are so?

Now a Man of a common Turn of Thought would be apt to make a very different
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If from the Variety of Opinions among Mankind as to some Virtues or Vices, he concluded these were variable; then from the universal Agreement of Mankind with regard to other Virtues and Vices, he would conclude these were fixed and invariable. The Consent of Mankind in the one, proves as much as their Disagreement in the other. And 'tis evident that both their Consent and Disagreement arise from the same Principle: A Principle which destroys the Tenets, which this Author labours to establish. For, to resume our Illustration, as the various Opinions concerning the superior Wholesomeness of this or that Kind of Diet, does not change the Nature of Bread or Poison; so neither can the various Opinions concerning Polygamy or Incest, affect or change the Nature of Benevolence and Generosity, Adultery and Murder. 'Tis plain, these various Opinions have been formed upon such Actions only as are not universally and clearly connected with the Happiness or Misery of Mankind. As these Actions have been deemed productive of the one or the other, they have been regarded as Virtues or Vices: But this Variety of Opinions does no more
more unsettle the Nature of those Actions, whose Tendency is clear and certain; than the Debates on the superior Wholesomeness of animal or vegetable Diet can change the Nature of Bread and Poison. Hence it appears, that Virtue and Vice are permanent Realities, and that their Nature is fixed, certain, and invariable.

THUS one Extreme produceth another. For the noble Writer and this Gentleman, through a strong Dislike of each other's System, have both endeavoured to prove too much, and in Consequence have proved nothing. The one, contending for the permanent Reality of Virtue, and, not content to fix it on its proper Basis, attempts to establish certain absolute and immutable Forms of Beauty, without Regard to any further End; and thus, by laying a chimerical Foundation, betrays the Cause which he so generously defends. The other, intent on destroying the permanent Reality of Virtue and Vice, and perceiving how weak a Basis the noble Writer had laid for their Establishment, after proving this to be imaginary, as wisely as honestly infers, there is no real one in Nature. We now see the Folly of these Extremes: That as on the
one Part, *Virtue* and *Vice* are Things merely relative to the *Happiness* of Man; so on the other, while Man continues what he is, all those *Relations* which concern his *Happiness*, and arise from his present *Manner* of Existence, are likewise *permanent* and *immutable*.

**SECTION V.**

**Sect. V.** But this idle Objection against the permanent *Reality* of *Virtue* and *Vice*, is not the only one which the Writer last mentioned hath laboured, for the Destruction of *Religion* and *Virtue*. For the main Drift and Intention of his Book is to prove no less a Paradox than this, that "*private Vices are public Benefits.*" Now, till this Objection be removed, our Idea and Definition of *Virtue* can never be thoroughly established. For if *private Vices be public Benefits*, then *private Virtues* are public *Mischiefs*. And if so, what becomes of our *Definition*?

The first notable Circumstance in this formidable Affertion of Dr. *Mandeville*, is its utter Inconsistency with all that he hath advanced in order to destroy the Reality of *Vice* and *Virtue*, For if indeed
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these be mere Names, the Creatures of Fancy and Opinion, how can they be attended with any uniform Effects? How can they be either public Benefits, or public Evils?---If, on the contrary, they really produce certain uniform Effects, as he hath attempted to prove, how can they be mere Non-Entities, the Creatures of Fancy and Opinion? Here lies a gross and palpable Incoherence: Take which of his two Theories you please, the other absolutely destroys it. If Vice be a public Benefit, it must be a permanent Reality: If it is not a permanent Reality, it cannot be a public Benefit.

Let us now examine the Foundations on which he hath built this strange Hypothesis. His Book may be analysed into four different Principles, which he hath variously combined, or rather jumbled together, according as each in their Turn would best serve his Purpose.

The first Principle he lays down, or rather takes for granted, is, "that Man is a Compound of evil Passions:" In other Words, "that the Gratification of the natural Appetites is in itself a Vice." There are in his Book at least a hundred Pages.
of the lowest common-Place Declamation, all founded on this one Principle, brought from the solitary Caves and Visions of the Desart. Thus the Desire of being esteemed by others, he stigmatizes with the Name of Pride: The natural Desire of social Converse between the two Sexes, he distinguishes by a groser Appellation. In a word, through the whole Course of his Argument, he supposes that every selfish Appetite (that is, every Appetite which hath regard to ourself) is in its own Nature vile and abominable. This the candid Reader will probably think a little hard upon human Nature: That no Man can be virtuous, while he endeavours to be esteemed, while he loves to quench his Thirst, minister to Posterity, or eat his Dinner. On the Weight of these plain Instances, the Value of this first Principle may be safely left to any Man's impartial Trial.

Having thus branded every Gratification of the natural Appetites; he gains from hence a proper Foundation for the second Pillar of this Temple of Vice. For he acquaints us with great solemnity, that, of all other Vices, that of Luxury is most beneficial to a State: And that if this were banished...
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banished the Nation, all Kinds of manual Occupations would immediately languish and decay. He says indeed, that Pedants make Objections to this Vice of Luxury, and tell you, that it enervates a People: But he adds, that, "since he has seen the World, the Consequences of Luxury to a Nation seem not so dreadful to him as they did." Had he left the Matter here, we should have been at a Loss to know how he would have made out this strange Tale: But the Riddle is cleared up at once, when we hear him say, that "every thing is Luxury, that is not immediately necessary to make Man subsist as he is a living Creature."

We should have been startled perhaps had he assured us, that he had a Wind-mill which laid Eggs, and bred young ones: But how easily had he reconciled us to his Veracity in only saying, that by a Wind-mill he meant a Goose, or a Turkey?

Thus, when he affirms that Luxury produceth public Happiness, we stand ready for some deep and subtile Speculation, to support so wondrous a Paradox. But when he poorly tells us, "that every thing is

Fable of the Bees, passim. 
Ibid. p. 247.
Ibid. p. 108.

Luxury
Luxury that is not immediately necessary to make Man subsist as he is a Living Creature; we laugh not so much at his Impudence, as at our own Folly in giving Ear to so idle a Prater, who, when we thought we had him reforming States, and new-modeling Philosophy, is all the while playing at Crambo.

Lest it should be suspected, that the Features of this Man's Folly are here aggravated, take a Copy of his Countenance in one Instance out of many that might be given. "The Consequences (faith he) of this Vice of Luxury to a Nation, seem not so dreadful to me as they did."---For clean Linen weakens a Man no more than Flannel. Now from these Passages laid together, it appears first, that Luxury is a Vice; secondly, that to wear clean Linen is Luxury; and therefore, it comes out as clear as the Day, "that to wear clean Linen is a Vice."

Seriously: The Sophistry here employed is such an Insult as hath been but seldom offered to the human Understanding. Did ever any Man before—except only a Set of wrong-headed Enthusiasts, whose
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Visions he is here obliged to adopt—did ever any Man maintain, that to use the Bounties of Nature, or enjoy the Conveniences of Life was a criminal Indulgence? Did ever any Man maintain, that he could be viciously luxurious, who neither hurt his Neighbour nor himself? At this Rate, by an arbitrary Use of Words, and putting one Expression for another, we might boldly advance the most palpable Contradictions, and maintain that Dr. M— — d— le was a Man of Modesty and Virtue.

Thus far we have seen this Writer endeavouring to throw the false Colours of Vice, upon the natural Passions, and such a Use of the Gift of Nature as is really Innocent. In examining his two remaining Principles, we shall find him acting a Part the very reverse; and with the same Effrontery, endeavouring to throw the false Colours of public Utility on such Actions and Affections as are really criminal and destructive.

To this Purpose he boldly selects some of the most flagrant Crimes; and assures us, that without their happy Influence the Public would suffer exceedingly. Who had ever dreamt, that Mankind receives Benefit from
from Thieves and House-breakers? Yet he tells us, that "if all People were strictly honest, half the Smiths in the Nation would want Employment?"

**Highwaymen** too, and **Robbers** are useful in their Generation. For "if a Miser should be robbed of five hundred or a thousand Guineas¹, it is certain, that as soon as this Money should come to circulate, the Nation would be the better for the Robbery, and receive the same and as real a Benefit from it, as if an Archbishop had left the same Sum to the Public n."

He is abundantly rhetorical on "the large Catalogue of solid Blessings that accrue from, and are owing to intoxicating Gin." Insomuch, that if the Drunken-

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k Fable of the Bees, p. 82.

¹ There is a common Error with regard to Misers, on which this pretended Argument is built. They are generally accounted the greatest Enemies of Society, because they hoard the Wealth which ought to circulate. Now, to give even a Miser his Due, this is really a groundless Charge: For they seldom hoard more than certain useless Papers in the Shape of Notes, Bonds, and Mortgages: While the Wealth which they thus hoard in Imagination, circulates freely among all Ranks of People. The Guilt of the Miser's Passion lies in it's being essentially destructive both of Justice and Benevolence.

n Fable of the Bees, p. 83.  n Ibid. p. 89.
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ness and Frenzy arising from the excessive Use of this salutary Liquor were curbed by the Magistrate, he seems to foretell the most fatal Consequences to the public Wealth and Welfare.

Here then he enumerates several real Crimes, which are necessarily attended with great Evils; and these he demonstrates, are accidentally productive of some Good. And this indeed is the only Part of his Argument, that is attended with any Degree of Plausibility: For here, it must be owned, there is Room for a dishonest Mind to confound, though by no means to convince an impartial Reader. Because the Consequences of these Crimes being of a various and discordant Nature, some having the Appearance of Good, and others of Ill to Society; a rhetorical Display of the former may possibly induce a superficial Inquirer, who is caught by a Glare of Eloquence, to doubt whether these do not really predominate. But a moderate Share of Attention will convince us, that this is impossible. Because all the real Vices he mentions, though they be accidentally productive of some Good; yet 'tis such as might effectually be obtained without them. Thus the Money
Money taken wrongfully by Stealth or Robbery, is only of Service to the Public by its Circulation: But Money may circulate without Stealth or Robbery; and therefore 'tis neither the Stealth nor Robbery that is of Service to the Public. On the other part, there are great and substantial Evils, which these Crimes, and these alone give Rise to. On this Occasion one might be very large on the Terrors and Distress, the Murders, and consequent Miseries, which the Villanies patronized by this Writer do necessarily produce. One who was Master of Dr. Mandeville's Town-Experience, might draw a striking Picture of honest and industrious Families roused from Sleep at Midnight, only to be plundered and destroyed; of the horrid Attempts of abandoned Wickedness, let loose from Fear by the Security of Darkness; the Shrieks of ravished Maids and Matrons; the dying Groans of Brothers, Fathers, Husbands, weltring in their Blood; the Cries of innocent and helpless Orphans weeping over their murdered Parents, deprived at once of all that were dear to them, of all that could yield them Consolation or Support; and suffering every vile Indignity, that unrelenting
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relenting Villainy can suggest or perpetrate. And how, think you, does this Scene of domestic Horror change its original Nature, and rise at length into a public Blessing? Why, because the Adventurers, having made off with their Booty, may possibly "lay it out upon a Harlot, or squander it in a Night-Cellar or Ginshop." And thus the Money circulates through the Nation. But, in the mean time, our Philosopher hath forgot the helpless Family reduced to Beggary by the Prowess of his nocturnal Heroes: He hath forgot that the fond and indulgent Parent might no less probably have laid out the Money in the temperate Maintenance and liberal Education of his Children, which is now squandered in unprofitable Riot and Excess: That these Destroyers of other Mens Happiness and their own, had they been employed in honest Labour, in the Cultivation of Lands, or the Improvement of Manufactures, might have done substantial Services to the Public and themselves, without the guilty Alloy of unprovoked Mischief. From these Circumstances, impartially compared, 'tis evident, that the only essential Consequence of

*Fable of the Bees*, p. 84, 85.

private
private Vice is public Misery: And thus our Author's new-fashioned System of Morals falls back again into nothing.

His fourth Principle is much less plausible. Indeed he never applies to this, but when reduced to the last Necessity: When therefore every other Foundation fails him, he attempts to impose upon his Reader's Negligence or Simplicity, by representing Vice as a Cause, where in Reality 'tis a Consequence. Thus he tells us, "Great Wealth and foreign Treasure will ever scorn to come among Men, unless you'll admit their inseparable Companions, Avarice and Luxury: Where Trade is considerable, Fraud will intrude. To be at once well-bred and sincere, is no less than a Contradiction: And therefore whilst Man advances in Knowledge, and his Manners are polished, we must expect to see at the same time his Desires enlarged, his Appetites refined, and his Vices increased".

So again, having been driven from his other strong Holds by certain impertinent Remarks, whom he wisely dismisseth with an Air of Superiority and Contempt, he takes refuge in the same ambiguous Phrases:

* Fable of the Bees, p. 201.
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As that "Vice is inseparable from great and potent Societies, in the same Manner as dirty Streets are a neccessary Evil, inseparable from the Felicity of London." Now, though this happy Simile may work Wonders in a Coffee-house, amongst those who see every dirty Alley pregnant with Demonstration; yet, 'tis to be hoped, more serious Readers may distinguish better; and be enabled to tell him, that before they grant his Position, that private Vice is public Benefit, they expect he should prove, "that the Dirt in London Streets, is the Cause or Instrument whereby London becomes a populous and flourishing City:" A Proposition almost as remote from common Apprehension, as that Tenterden Steeple is the Cause of Goodwin Sands. Thus, we see how dexterously he puts the Change upon the unwary Reader; and while he pretends to exhibit an essential Cause, flurs him off with an accidental Consequence.

Into these four Principles, all evidently False or Foreign to the Purpose, his whole Book may be justly analysed. Nor is there one Observation in the Compass of so many hundred Pages, which tends to support the

*Fable of the Bees, Preface, p. 9, &c.*

pernicious
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perrnicious falsehood that disgraceth his Title-Page, but what will naturally resolve itself into one or other of these wretched Sophisms. 'Tis therefore unnecessary to lead the Reader through all the Windings of this immense Labyrinth of Falsehood; 'tis enough, to have given the Clue which may safely conduct him through them.

SECTION VI.

HAVING at length gained an adequate Idea of Virtue, and found that it is no other than "the voluntary Production of the greatest public Happiness;" we may now safely proceed to consider, "what are the Motives by which Mankind can be induced to the Practice of it?"

And here we shall find another metaphysical Cloud resting upon this Path, in itself plain and easy to all Mankind. For the very Notion of the Motives to Virtue hath been as much confounded by moral Writers, as the Idea of Virtue itself. And here we might travel through another System of Logomachies; while one afferts, that we ought to be moved to love and pursue Virtue, because she is beautiful; another, because
because Virtue is good; another, because Virtue is good in itself; a fourth, because Virtue is Truth; a fifth, because it is agreeable to Nature; a sixth, because it is agreeable to the Relations of Things.

But 'tis supposed that the intelligent Reader, from a Review of the first Section of this Essay, may be convinced, that all these amusing Expressions amount to no more than this, "that there is some Reason or other why we ought to practise Virtue; but that the particular Reason doth not appear, notwithstanding all this refined Pomp of Affirmation." And as it hath already been made evident, that the Essence of Virtue consists in a Conformity of our Affections and Actions, with the greatest public Happiness; so it will now appear, that "the only Reason or Motive, by which Individuals can possibly be induced to the Practice of Virtue, must be the Feeling immediate, or the Prospect of future private Happiness."

Doubtless, the noble Writer's Admirers will despise and reject this, as an unworthy Maxim. For so it hath happened, that in the height of their Zeal, for supporting his Opinions, they generally stigmatize private Happiness.
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Happiness, as a Thing scarce worth a wise Man's inquiring after. Indeed, the many ambiguous Phrases of their Master have contributed not a little to this vulgar Error. For in one Place, he brands the modern Philosophers and Divines with the Name of Sophisters and Pedants, "for rating Life by the Number and Exquisiteness of the pleasing Sensations." At other Times he speaks of Pleasure, with all the Contempt of an ancient Stoic. In the same high Style of the Athenian Porch, he passeth Judgment on the Hopes of the Religious: "They have made Virtue so mercenary a Thing, and have talked so much of its Rewards, that one can hardly tell what there is in it, after all, which can be worth rewarding." So again, he decries those "modern Projectors, who would new-frame the human Heart; and have a mighty Fancy to reduce all its Motions, Balances, and Weights to that one Principle and Foundation of a cool and deliberate Selfishness: And thus, Love of one's Country, and Love of Mankind, must also be Self-Love."

Now ere we proceed further, it may be necessary to remark, that in some Degree there hath been a Strife about Words in this Particular too. For these Expressions of Selfishness and Disinterestedness have been used in a very loose and indeterminate Manner. In one Sense a Motive is called disinterested; when it consists in a pure benevolent Affection, or a Regard to the moral Sense. In another, no Motive is disinterested: For even in acting according to these Impulses of Benevolence and Conscience, we gratify an Inclination, and act upon the Principle or immediate Feeling of private Happiness. Thus when we say, "We love Virtue for Virtue's Sake;" 'tis only implied, that we find immediate Happiness from the Love and Practice of Virtue, without Regard to external or future Consequences.

Another Source of mutual Misapprehension on this Subject hath been "the Introduction of metaphorical Expressions instead of proper ones." Nothing is so common among the Writers on Morality, as "the Harmony of Virtue." "The Proportion of Virtue." So the noble Writer frequently expresseth himself. But his favourite
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Your favourite Term, borrowed indeed from the Ancients, is "the Beauty of Virtue." — Quae si videri posset, mirabiles excitaret amores. — Of this our Author and his Followers, especially the most ingenious of them, are so enamoured, that they seem utterly to have forgot they are talking in Metaphor, when they describe the Charms of this sovereign Fair. Insomuch, that an unexperienced Person, who should read their Encomiums, would naturally fall into the Mistake of him, who asked the Philosopher "Whether the Virtues were not "living Creatures?" Now this figurative Manner, so essentially interwoven into philosophical Disquisition, hath been the Occasion of great Error. It tends to mislead us both with regard to the Nature of Virtue, and our Motives to the Practice of it. For first, it induceth a Persuasion, that Virtue is excellent without Regard to any of its Consequences: And secondly, that he must either want Eyes, or common Discernment, who doth not at first Sight fall in Love with this matchless Lady.

Therefore setting aside, as much as may be, all ambiguous Expressions, it seems

* Cicero. * Mr. Hutcheson. + Seneca Epist. oxiv. 4 evidently
Evident, that "a Motive, from its very Na-
ture, must be something that affects our-
self." If any Man hath found out a Kind of Motive which doth not affect himself, he hath made a deeper Investigation into the "Springs, Weights, and Balances" of the human Heart, than I can pretend to. Now what can possibly affect ourself, or determine us to Action, but either the Feeling or Prospect of Pleasure or Pain, Happiness or Misery?

But to come to the direct Proof: 'Tis evident, even to Demonstration, that no Affection, can in the strict Sense, be more or less selfish or disinterested than another; because, whatever be its Object, the Affection itself is still no other than a Mode either of Pleasure or of Pain; and is therefore equally to be referred to the Mind or Feeling of the Patient, whatever be its external Occasion. Indeed, a late Writer of Subtilty and Refinement, hath attempted to make a Distinction here. He says, "It hath been observed, that every Act of Virtue or Friendship is attended with a secret Pleasure; from whence it hath been concluded, that Friendship and Vir-
tue could not be disinterested. But the

Fallacy
Fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous Sentiment or Passion produces the Pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a Pleasure in doing good to my Friend, because I love him: but I do not love him for the Sake of that Pleasure. Now to me, the Fallacy of this is obvious. For in Fact, neither the Passion, nor the Pleasure, are either the Cause or the Consequence of each other; they neither produce nor arise from each other; because in Reality, they are the same Thing under different Expressions. This will be clear, if we state the Case as follows: "To love my Friend is to feel a Pleasure in doing him Good:" And conversely; "to feel a Pleasure in doing Good to my Friend, is to love him." Where 'tis plain that the Terms are synonymous. The Pleasure therefore is the very Passion itself; and neither prior nor posterior to it, as this Gentleman supposeth.

Again, that the Pleasures of Benevolence, and the moral Sense, are strictly Selfish, in this Sense of the Word, like every other Enjoyment, seems evident from some parallel Concessions of the noble Writer. For these seemingly disinterested

2 Hume's Essays, Mor. and Polit. p. 125.
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Pleasures he perpetually sets on a Level with the Perceptions of natural Beauty, Order, Harmony, and Proportion. These last are, by all, acknowledged to be of the selfish Kind; therefore the other are so too; being only a higher Order of the same, and expressly called so by the noble Writer.

The Reasons why the great universal Principle of private Happiness hath not been so clearly seen in the Benevolent, as in the Self-Passions; seem to be these. First, Ambiguous Expressions, such as have been remarked above. 2dly, Perhaps some Degree of Pride, and Affectation of Merit; because Merit seems to appear in what is called Disinterest. 3dly, And perhaps principally, because in the Exercise of the benevolent Passions, the Happiness is essentially concomitant with the Passion itself, and therefore is not easily separated from it by the Imagination, so as to be considered as a distinct End. Whereas in the Passions called Selfish, the Happiness sought after is often unattainable, and therefore easily and necessarily distinguished by the Imagination as a positive End. This Circumstance of Union however, as is judiciously remarked by Moralists, Partii.
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Essay by one of the noble Writer's Followers, proves the great Superiority and Excellence of the benevolent Affections, considered as a Source of Happiness, beyond the Passions and Appetites, commonly called the Selfish.

But although these Observations be necessary, in order to clear up an Affair, which hath been much perplexed with philosophical, or unphilosophical Refinements; yet, on a closer Examination, it will appear, in the most direct Manner, from the noble Writer himself, that "there is no other Principle of human Action, but that of the immediate or foreseen Happiness of the Agent;" That all these amusing Speculations concerning the Comely, Fit, and Decent; all these verbal Separations between Pleasure, Interest, Beauty, and Good, might have been sunk in one precise and plain Disquisition, concerning such Actions and Affections as yield a lasting, and such as afford only a short and transient Happiness. For thus, after all, his Lordship explains himself: "That Happiness is to be pursued, and, in Fact, is always sought after; that the Question is not, who loves himself, and

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"who not; but who loves and serves himself the rightest, and after the truest Manner— That 'tis the Height of Wisdom, no doubt, to be rightly Selfish." — "Even to leave Family, Friends, Country, and Society in good Earnest, who would not, if it were Happiness to do so?"

These Expressions are so strongly pointed, as to leave no further Doubt concerning the noble Writer's Sentiments on this Subject. Indeed, they are the natural Dictates of common Sense unsophisticated with false Philosophy. In every subsequent Debate therefore, wherein his Lordship's Opinions are concerned, we may safely build on this as an acknowledged and sure Foundation, "that the Motives of Man to the Practice of Virtue, can only arise from a Sense of his present, or a Prospect of his future Happiness."

SECTION VII.

NOW this Conclusion will carry us to another Question of a very interesting and abstruse Nature: That is, "How far, and upon what Foundation, the uniform Wit and Humour, Part iii. § 3. Practice
Essay "II. Practice of Virtue, is really and clearly connected with the Happiness of every Individual? For so far, as we have seen, and no further, can every Individual be naturally moved to the Practice of it.

This is evidently a Question of Fact: And as it relates to the Happiness of Man, can only be determined by appealing to his Constitution. If this be indeed uniform and invariable; that is, if every Individual hath the same Perceptions, Passions, and Desires; then indeed the sources of Happiness must be similar and unchangeable. If, on the contrary, different Men be differently constituted; if they have different Perceptions, Passions, and Desires; then must the Sources of their Happiness be equally various.

It should seem therefore, that " while Moralists have been enquiring into human Happiness, they have generally considered it as arising from an uniform and particular Source, instead of tracing it up to those various Fountains whence it really springs; which are indefinitely various, combined, and indeterminable." And this seems to have been the most general Foundation of Error.
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If we speak with Precision, there are but three Sources in Man, of Pleasure and Pain, Happiness and Misery: These are Sense, Imagination, and the Passions. Now the slightest Observation will convince us, that these are associated, separated, and combined in Man, with a Variety almost infinite. In some, the Pleasures and Pains of Sense predominate; Imagination is dull; the Passions inactive. In others, a more delicate Frame awakens all the Powers of Imagination; the Passions are refined; the Senses disregarded. A third Constitution is carried away by the Strength of Passion: The Calls of Sense are contemned; and Imagination becomes no more than the necessary Instrument of some further Gratification.

From overlooking this plain Fact, seems to have arisen the Discordance among Philosophers concerning the Happiness of Man. And while each hath attempted to exhibit one favourite Picture, as the Paragon or Standard of human Kind; they have all omitted some Ten thousand other Resemblances which actually subsist in Nature.

Thus, most of the Epicurean Sect, tho' not the Founder of it, have discarded Be-

Ἐπικούρος ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐπί ταῖς, &c. Epicurus,
nevolence
nevolence and Virtue from their System of private Happiness. The modern Patronizers of this Scheme, Mr. Hobbes, Dr. Mandeville, and several French Writers, after heaping up a Collection of fordid Instances, which prove the sensual Inclinations and Selfishness of Man, leap at once to their desired Conclusion, that the pretended public Affections are therefore no more than the same low Passions in Disguise. That Benevolence makes no Part of Man's Nature; that the human Kind are absolutely unconnected with each other in Point of Affection: And that every Individual seeks and finds his private Happiness in and from himself alone.

The noble Writer, on the contrary, viewing the brighter Parts of human Nature, through the amiable Medium of the Socratic Philosophy; and fixing his Attention,

Philosophus, in libro quem Ratas Opiniones inscribit, vitam cum justitia conjunctam perturbatione vacare pronunciat; inustam vero perturbationem quamplurima resertam esse; brevi dico multae verae sententiae, et, ut summam dicatur, id quod hominum improbitatem probe corrigere quaeat, complexus. Injustitia enim metropolis omnium malorum, non infime tantum conditionis hominibus, sed semel ut comprehendamus omnia, etiam gentibus, et civitatum populis et regibus, maximas producit calamitates. Diodorus Sic. Eclog. I. 25.
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- The public Affections
- as the Instruments both of public and private Happiness
- rejects the Epicurean's Pretences with Disdain
- And fully conscious of the high Claims and Energy of Virtue, affirms that the private Affections are, by no means, a Foundation for private Happiness
- That, on the contrary, we must universally promote the Welfare of others, if we would effectually secure our own
- And that in every Case, "Virtue is the Good and Vice the Ill of every one."

'Tis plain, no two Systems of Philosophy can be more discordant than these; yet each of them have obtained a Number of Partisans in all Ages of the World. The Question relates to a Fact, and the Facilities open to the personal Examination of all Mankind. Whence then can so strange an Opposition of Sentiments arise?

This seems to have arisen, not from a false, but a partial View and Examination of the Subject. The Stoic Party dwell altogether on the social or public, the Epicurean no less on the private or selfish Affections: On these respectively they declaim; so that, according to the one, Mankind are naturally...
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Essay a Race of Demi-Gods; according to the other, a Crew of Devils. Both forgetting, what is unquestionably the Truth, that these social and private Affections are blended in an endless Variety of Degrees, and thus form an infinite Variety of Inclinations and of Characters. Many of the particular Facts, therefore, which these two Sects alledge, are true: But the general Consequence they draw from these particular Facts, is groundless and imaginary. Thus, 'tis true, that Mankind reap high Enjoyments from the Senses, Imagination, and Passions, without any Regard to the public Affections: But the Consequence which the Epicurean would draw from hence, that "therefore the Public Affections are never, in any Case, a Source of private Happiness;" this is entirely void of Evidence: It supposeth Mankind to be one uniform Subject, while it is a Subject infinitely various; that every Individual has the same Feelings, Appetites, Fancies, and Affections, while, in Fact, they are mixed and combined in an endless Variety of Degrees. So, on the contrary, it must appear to every impartial Observer, that "the Exercise of the public Affections is a Source of the highest Grati-
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Gratification to many Individuals." But the Stoic's Conclusion, that "therefore the uniform Exercise of the public Affections, in Preference to every other, is the only Source of Happiness to every Individual;" this is a Conclusion equally void of Evidence. For, like its opposite Extreme, it supposeth Mankind to be one uniform Subject, while, in Fact, it is a Subject indefinitely various. It supposes that every Individual has the same Feelings, Appetites, Fancies, and Affections, while, in Reality, they are mixed and combined in an endless Variety of Degrees.

Let us now assign the most probable Foundation, on which these narrow and partial Systems have been so commonly embraced. For, that two Theories so opposite, and so devoid of all rational Support, should have made their Way in the World, without some permanent Cause beyond the Instability of mere Chance, seems hardly credible.

It should seem therefore, that "while the Patronizers of these two Systems have attempted to give a general Picture of the human Species, they have all along taken the Copy from themselves: And thus their
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their Philosophy, instead of being a true History of Nature, is no more than the History of their own Imagination or Affections."—This Truth may receive sufficient Confirmation from the Lives and Conduct of all the old Philosophers, from the elegant Plato walking on his rich Carpets, to the unbred Cynic snarling in his Tub. As every Man's Constitution led him, so he adopted this or that Sect of Philosophy, and reasoned concerning Fitness, Decency, and Good. Read the Characters of Cato and Cesar, and you will clearly discover the true Foundation on which the one became a rigid Stoic, the other, a gross Epicurean. The first, yet a Boy, discovered such an inflexible Adherence to the Privileges of his Country, that he refused his Assent to what he thought a Violation of them, though threatened with immediate Death. The latter, yet unpractised in the Subtilities of Philosophy, and under the sole Dominion of natural Temper, discovered, at his first Appearance in the World, such Traits of Art, Spirit, and Ambition; that Sylla declared, he saw something more formidable than Marius rising in him.

174 Plutarchi Cato Utic. b Suetonii Julius Cesar.
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To bring down the Observation to modern Times; 'tis evident, that the Patronizers of these two Systems inlist themselves according to the secret Suggestions of their several Passions. 'Tis well known, that the Writer of the Fable of the Bees, was neither a Saint in his Life, nor a Hermit in his Diet: He seems to have been Master of a very considerable Sagacity, much Knowledge of the World, as it appears in populous Cities, extremely sensible to all the grosser bodily Enjoyments; but for Delicacy of Sentiment, Imagination, or Passion, for an exquisite Tast in Arts or Morals, he appears to have been incapable of it. --- The noble Writer is known to have been of a Frame the very Reverse of this: His Constitution was neither more nor less opposite to Dr. Mandeville's, than his Philosophy. His sensual Appetites were weak; his Imagination all alive, noble, and capacious; his Passions were accordingly refined, and his public Affections (in Fancy at least) predominant. To these Instances, a moderate Share of Sagacity and Knowledge of the World may add others innumerable, in observing the Temper and Conduct of the Followers of these two Systems; who al-
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ways take Party according to the Bias of their own Constitution. Among the Epicureans we ever find Men of high Health, florid Complexions, firm Nerves, and a Capacity for Pleasure: Of the Stoic Party are the delicate or sickly Frames Men incapable of the grosser sensual Enjoyments, and who either are, or think themselves, virtuous. Now from these accumulated Proofs we may be convinced, that "they who give us these uniform Pictures of a Subject so various as Mankind, cannot have drawn them from Nature: That, on the contrary, they have copied them from their own Hearts or Imaginations; and fondly erected themselves into a general Standard of the human Species."

But although these Observations may afford sufficient Proof, that the Stoic and Epicurean Pictures of Mankind are equally partial; yet still it remains to be enquired how far, upon the whole, the human Kind in Reality leans towards the one or the other: That is, "how far, and in what Degree, the uniform Practice of Virtue constitutes the Happiness of individuals?" Now the only Method of determining this Question, will be to select some of the most striking Features
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Features of the human Heart: By this means we may approach towards a real likeness, though, from that infinite variety which subsists in nature, the draught must ever be inadequate and defective.

To begin with the lowest temperature of the human species; "there are great numbers of mankind, in whom the senses are the chief sources of pleasure and pain." To the harmony of sounds, the beauty of forms, the decorum of actions, they are utterly insensible. They are sagacious and learned in all the gratifications of sense; but if you talk to them of the public affections, of generosity, kindness, friendship, good-will, you talk in a language they understand not. They seem, in a manner, unconnected with the rest of their kind; they view the praises, censures, enjoyments, and sufferings of others, with an eye of perfect indifference. To men thus formed, how can virtue gain admittance? Do you appeal to their taste of beauty? They have none. To their acknowledged perceptions of right and wrong? These they measure by their private interest. To the force of the public affections? They never felt them. Thus every
The next remarkable Peculiarity is, "where not the Senses, but Imagination is the predominant Source of Pleasure." Here the Taste always runs into the elegant Refinements of polite Arts and Acquirements; of Painting, Music, Architecture, Poetry, Sculpture: Or, in Defect of this truer Taste, on the false Delicacies of Dress, Furniture, and Equipage. Yet Experience tells us, that this Character is widely different from the virtuous one: That all the Powers of Imagination may subsist in their full Energy, while the public Affections and moral Sense are weak or utterly inactive. Nor can there be any necessary Connection between these different Feelings; because we see Numbers immersed in all the finer Pleasures of Imagination, who never once consider them as the Means of giving Pleasure to others, but merely a selfish Gratification. This the noble Writer seems to have been aware of; and, not without great Address, endeavours to convert the Fact into a Proof of his main Theory, though, in Reality, it affords the strongest Evidence against him. "The Venusium, the Honestum, the Decorum

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"Decorum of Things, will force its Way. Sect. VII.

Those who refuse to give it Scope in the nobler Subjects of a rational and moral Kind, will find its Prevalency elsewhere, in an inferior Order of Things—as either in the Study of common Arts, or in the Care and Culture of mere mechanic Beauties.—The Spectre still will haunt us, in some Shape or other; and when driven from our cool Thoughts, and frightened from the Closet, will meet us even at Court, and fill our Heads with Dreams of Grandeur, Titles, Honours, and a false Magnificence and Beauty. All this is ingenious and plausible: And the very elegant Allusion, of "the Spectre still haunting us in some Shape or other," seems at first View to imply, that even the most obstinate Endeavours to get rid of the Force of moral Beauty, are ineffectual and vain. But a nearer Examination will convince us, that the noble Writer applies here to Eloquence, rather than Argument; and puts us off with a Metaphor instead of a Reason. For the Pleasures of Imagination, whether they run in the Channel of polite Arts, Furniture, Planting, Building, or Equipage, are

\[^b\] Wit and Hum. Part iv. § 2.

indeed
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Indeed no Spectres, but independent Realities fairly existing in the Mind: They have no immediate or necessary Connexion with the Happiness of Mankind, which is often and designedly violated in order to gain the Possession of them. 'Tis true, the Pleasures of Imagination and Virtue are often united in the same Mind; but 'tis equally true, that they are often separate; that they who are most sensible to the one, are entire Strangers to the other; that one Man, to purchase a fine Picture, will oppress his Tenant; that another, to relieve his distressed Tenant, will fell his Statues or his Pictures. The Reason is evident: The one draws his chief Pleasure from Imagination; the other from Affection only. 'Tis clear therefore, that "where Imagination is naturally the predominant Source of Pleasure," the Motives to Virtue must be very partial and weak, since the chief Happiness ariseth from a Source entirely distinct from the benevolent Affections.

Another, and very different Temperatur of the Heart of Man is, that "wherein neither Sense nor Imagination, but the Passions are the chief Sources of Pleasure and Pain." This often forms the
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best or the worst of Characters. As it runs either, First, Into the Extreme of Selfishness, Jealousy, Pride, Hatred, Envy, and Revenge; or, 2dly, Into the amiable Affections of Hope, Faith, Candour, Pity, Generosity, and Good-will; or, 3dly, Into a various Mixture or Combination of these; which is undoubtedly the most common Temperature of human Kind.

Now to the first of these Tempers, how can we affirm with Truth, that there is a natural Motive to Virtue? On the contrary, it should seem, that, if there be any Motive, it must be to Vice. For 'tis plain, that from the Losses, Disappointments, and Miseries of Mankind, such vile Tempers draw their chief Felicity. The noble Writer indeed, in his Zeal for Virtue, considers these black Passions as unnatural, and brands them as a Source of constant Misery. And sure it would be matter of Joy to all good Men, to find his Proofs convincing. But if indeed this be not a true Representation of the Case, I see not what Service can be done to the Interests of Virtue, by disguising Truth. 'Tis not the Part of a Philosopher to write Panegyrics, but to investigate the
real State of human Nature; and the only Way of doing this to any good Purpose, is to do it impartially: For with regard to human Nature, as well as Individuals, "Flattery is a Crime no less than Slander."

When therefore the noble Writer calls these Affections unnatural, he doth not sufficiently explain himself. If indeed by their being unnatural, he means that "they are such in their Degrees or Objects as to violate the public Happiness, which is the main Intention of Nature;" in this Sense, 'tis acknowledged they are unnatural. But this Interpretation is foreign to the Question; because it affects not the Individual. But if, by their being unnatural, he would imply, that they are "a Source of constant Misery to the Agent;" this seems a Proposition not easy to be determined in the Affirmative.

For the main Proof which he brings in Support of his Assertion, is, "that the Men of gentlest Dispositions, and best of Tempers, have at some time or other been sufficiently acquainted with those Disturbances, which, at ill Hours, even small Occasions are apt to raise. From these slender Experiences of Harshness and ill Humour,
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"Humour, they fully know and will confess the ill Moments which are passed, when the Temper is ever so little galled and fretted. How must it fare therefore with those, who hardly know any better Hours in Life; and who, for the greatest Part of it, are agitated by a thorow active Spleen, a close and settled Malignity and Rancour?"

Now, this Instance is by no means sufficient to support the Affirmation. For 'tis plain, that in the Case of the "Men of gentlest Dispositions, and best of Tempers, occasionally agitated by ill Humour," there must be a strong Opposition and Discordance, a violent Conflict between the habitual Affections of Benevolence, and these accidental Eruptions of Spleen and Rancour which rise to obstruct their Course. A Warfare of this Kind must indeed be a State of complete Misery, when all is Uproar within, and the distracted Heart set at Variance with itself. But the Case is widely different, where "a thorow active Spleen prevails, a close and settled Malignity and Rancour." For in this Temper, there is no parallel Opposition of contending Passions;
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Nor therefore any similar Foundation for inward Disquiet and intense Misery. So much the noble Writer himself is obliged to own elsewhere. "Is there that sordid Creature on earth, who does not prize his own Enjoyment?---Is not Malice and Cruelty of the highest Relish with some Natures?" Again, and still more fully to the Purpose: "Had we Sense, we should consider, 'tis in Reality the thorough Profiligate, the very complete unnatural Villain alone, who can any way bid for Happiness with the honest Man. True Interest is wholly on the one Side or the other. All between is Inconsistency, Irresolution, Remorse, Vexation, and an Ague-fit." Neither is this Acknowledgment peculiar to himself: "To be consistent either in Virtue or in Vice," was the farthest that some of the most penetrating among the Ancients could carry the Point of Morals. Thus where the selfish or malevolent Affections happen to prevail, there can be no internal Motive to Virtue.

On the contrary, where the amiable Affections of Hope, Candour, Generosity, and

1 Morals, Part i. 2 Wit and Hum. Part iv. § 1.

See Arrian. Epist. lib. iii. c. 15.

Benevo-
Benevolence predominate, in this best and happiest of Tempers, Virtue hath indeed all the Force and Energy, which the noble Writer attributes to her Charms. For where the Calls of Sense are weak; the Imagination active and refined, the public Affections predominant; there the moral Sense must naturally reign with uncontrolled Authority; must produce all that Self-Satisfaction, that Consciousness of merited Kindness and Esteem, in which, his Lordship affirms, the very Essence of our Motives to Virtue doth consist. This shall with Pleasure be acknowledged, nay asserted, as "the happiest of all Tempers," whenever it can be found or acquired. To a Mind thus formed, Virtue doth indeed bring an immediate and ample Reward of perfect Peace and sincere Happiness in all the common Situations of Life. It may therefore be with Truth affirmed, that a Temper thus framed must indeed be naturally and internally moved to the uniform Practice of Virtue.

There are, besides these, an endless Variety of Characters formed from the various Combinations of these essential Ingredients; which are not designed as a full Expression.
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Expression of all the Tempers of Mankind: They are the Materials only, out of which these Characters are formed. They are no more than the several Species of simple Colours laid, as it were, upon the Pallet; which, variously combined and associated by the Hand of an experienced Master, would indeed call forth every striking Resemblance, every changeful Feature of the Heart of Man.

Now, among all this infinite Variety of Tempers which is found in Nature, we see there cannot be any uniform Motive to Virtue, save only "where the Senses are weak, the Imagination refined, and the public Affections strongly predominant." For in every other Character, where either the Senses, gross Imagination, or selfish Passions prevail, a natural Opposition or Discordance must arise, and destroy the uniform Motive to Virtue, by throwing the Happiness of the Agent into a different Channel. How seldom this sublime Temper is to be found, is hard to say: But this may be affirmed with Truth, that every Man is not really possessed of it in the Conduct of Life, who enjoys it in Imagination, or admires it in his Closet, as it lies in the Enquiry concerning Virtue.
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Virtue. A Character of this supreme Excellence must needs be approved by most:

And the Heart of Man being an unexhausted Fountain of Self-Deceit, what it approves, is forward to think itself possessed of. Thus a lively Imagination and unperceived Self-Love, fetter the Heart in certain ideal Bonds of their own creating: Till at length some turbulent and furious Passion arising in its Strength breaks these fantastic Shackles which Fancy had imposed, and leaps to its Prey like a Tyger chained by Cobwebs.

SECTION VIII.

From these different Views of human Nature, let us now bring this Argument to a Conclusion.

The noble Writer's Scheme of Morals therefore, being grounded on a Supposition, which runs through the whole Course of his Argument, that "all Mankind are naturally capable of attaining a Taste or Relish for Virtue, sufficient for every Purpose of social Life," seems essentially defective. For, from the Enquiry already made into the real and various Constitution of Man, it appears, that a great Part of the Species
Species are naturally incapable of this fancied Excellence. That the various Mixture and Predominancy of Sense, Imagination, and Passion, give a different Cast and Complexion of Mind to every Individual: That the Feeling or Prospect of Happiness can only arise from this Combination: That consequently, where the benevolent Affections and moral Sense are weak, the selfish Passions and Perceptions headstrong, there can be no internal Motive to the consistent Practice of Virtue.

The most plausible Pretence I could ever meet with, amidst all the Pomp of Declamation thrown out in Support of this All-sufficiency of a Taste in Morals, is this: "That although the Force and Energy of this Taste for Virtue appears not in every Individual, yet the Power lies dormant in every human Breast; and needs only be called forth by a voluntary Self-discipline, in order to be brought to its just perfection. That the Improvement in our Taste in Morals is parallel to the Progress of the Mind in every other Art and Excellence, in Painting, Music, Architecture, Poetry: In which, a true Taste, however natural to Man, is not born with him,
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"him, but formed and brought forth to Action by a proper Study and Application."

The noble Writer hath innumerable Passages of this Kind: So many indeed, that it were Labour lost to transcribe them. And one of his Followers hath affirmed in still more emphatical Expressions, if possible, than his Master, "that the Height of Virtuosity is Virtue."

Now this State of the Case, though at first View it carries some Degree of Plausibility, yet on a closer Examination, destroys the whole System. For if, as it certainly is, the Capacity for a Taste in Morals, be similar to a Capacity for a Taste in Arts; 'tis clear, that the most assiduous Culture or Self-Discipline can never make it even general, much less universal. One Man, we see, hath a Capacity or Genius for Painting, another for Music, a third for Architecture, a fourth for Poetry. Torture each of them as you please, you cannot infuse a Taste for any, but his own congenial Art. If you attempt to make the Poet an Architect, or the Painter a Musician, you may make a pre-

* Charact. paullum.  

† Letters of Hydæstes to Philo- 

• Letters of Hydæstes to Philo-

...tending
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Essay tending Pedant, never an accomplished Master. 'Tis the same in Morals: Where the benevolent Affections are naturally strong, there is a Capacity for a high Taste in Virtue: Where these are weak or wanting, there is in the same Proportion little or no Capacity for a Taste in Virtue. To harangue, therefore, on the superior Happiness attending the Exercise of the public Affections, is quite foreign to the Purpose. This superior Happiness is allowed, where the public Affections can be found, or made, predominant. But how can any Consequence be drawn from hence, so as to influence those who never felt the Impulse of public Affection? Are not the Pleasures of Poetry, Painting, Music, sublime, pure, and lasting, to those who taste them? Doth it therefore follow, that all Mankind, or any of them, can be harangued into a Taste and Love of these elegant Arts, while the very Capacity of receiving Pleasure from them is wanting? Thus in Morals, where a similar Incapacity takes place through the natural Want of a lively Benevolence, no Progress can ever be made in the Taste or Relish for virtuous Enjoyment. Though therefore you should prove, as indeed one of Lord Shaftesbury's
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BURY's Followers hath done, "that Virtue is accommodate to all Places and Times, is durable, self-derived, and indeprivable," whence he concludes, it has the best Title to the Character of the sovereign Good; yet all the while, the main Point in Debate is taken for granted, that is, "whether the Possession of it be any Good at all." Now to those who receive no Increase of internal Happiness from it, it cannot be a Good: And where there is a natural Defect of benevolent Affection, it can give no internal Happiness: Consequently, though it have all the other Characters of the Summum Bonum, though it be durable, self-derived, and indeprivable, it can never, by such, be regarded as the sovereign Good.

'Tis pleasant enough to observe the Argumentation of the Writer last mentioned. After describing "the fairest and most amiable of Objects, the true and perfect Man, that Ornament of Humanity, that god-like Being, without Regard either to Pleasure or Pain, uninfluenced either by Prosperity or Adversity, superior to the World, and its best and worst Events"—He then raiseth an Objection—"Does not this

Three Treat, by J. H. Treat. 3d. On Happiness.

"System
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System border a little upon the Chimerical?—On my Word, a shrewd Question, and well worth a good Answer; and thus he clears it up.—"It seems to require, said I, a Perfection to which no Individual ever arrived. That very Transcendence, said he, is an Argument on its behalf. Were it of a Rank inferior, it would not be that Perfection which we seek. Would you have it, said I, beyond Nature? If you mean, replied he, beyond any particular or individual Nature, most undoubtedly I would." Tis not therefore to be wondered at, that this Gentleman, wrapped up in Visions of ideal Perfection, should express "his Contempt of those superficial Censurers, who profess to refute what they want even Capacities to comprehend." Doubtless he means those groveling Observers, who draw their Ideas of Mankind "from particular or individual Natures," and have not yet risen to "the beatific Vision" of the perfect Man. Indeed, the Gentleman frankly owns, "that Practice too often creeps, where Theory

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"can
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"can soar." And this I take to be a true Account of the Matter.

Thus, as, according to these Moralists, the Relish or Taste for Virtue is similar to a Taste for Arts; so what is said of the Poet, the Painter, the Musician, may in this Regard with equal Truth be said of the Man of Virtue—\( \textit{Nascitur, non fit} \). Hence it is evident, that the noble Writer's System, which supposeth all Men capable of this exalted Taste, is chimerical and groundless.

But even supposing all Men capable of this high Taste in Morals, there would arise an unanswerable Objection against the Efficacy of this refined Theory. Though it were allowed, that all Mankind have the same delicate Perception of moral, as some few have of natural Beauty, yet the Parallel would by no Means hold, that "as the Virtuoso always pursues his Taste in Arts consistently, so the Man of Virtue must be equally consistent in Action and Behaviour." For the Virtuoso being only engaged in mere Speculation, hath no opposite Affections to counteract his Taste: He meets with no Obstructions in his Admira-

* Three Treat. by J. H. Treat. 3d. On Happiness, p. 108

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The Motive to Virtue: His Enthusiasm takes its unbounded Flight, not retarded by any Impediments of a discordant Nature. But the Man of Virtue hath a different and more difficult Task to perform: He hath often a numerous Train of Passions, and these perhaps the most violent to oppose: He must labour through the surrounding Demands and Allurements of selfish Appetite: Must subdue the Sollicitations of every the most natural Affection, when it opposes the Dictates of a pure Benevolence. Hence even supposing the most refined Taste for Virtue common to all, it must ever be retarded in its Progress, often baffled and overthrown amidst the Struggle of contending Passions.

This seems to be a full and sufficient Reply to all that can be urged in Support of this fantastic System from a View of human Nature. But as the noble Writer hath attempted to confirm his Theory by some collateral Arguments of another Kind, it may be proper here to consider their real Weight.

He urges, therefore, the Probability at least, if not the certain Truth of his Hypothesis from hence, "That it would be an Imputation on the Wisdom of the Deity..."
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"to suppose that he had formed Man so " imperfect, that the true Happiness of the " individual should not always coincide " with that of the whole Kind." And beyond Question, the Assertion is true: But the Consequence he draws from it, "that " therefore human Happiness must always " consist in the immediate Feeling of virtu- " ous Enjoyment," is utterly groundless. This Inference seems to have been drawn from a View of the Brute Creation; in which we find, Instincts or immediate Feelings are the only Motives to Action; and in which we find too, that these immediate Propensities are sufficient for all the Pur- poses of their Being. In this Constitution of Things the Creator's Wisdom is emi-

nently displayed; because, through a Defect of Reason or Reflexion, no other Kind of Principle could possibly have taken place. But the Conclusion drawn from thence, " that Man must have a similar Strength of " Instinct implanted in him, in order to di- " rect him to his supreme Happiness," this is without Foundation: Because the Deity hath given him not only present Per-

ceptions, but Reason, Reflexion, and a Fore-

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Fight of future Good and Evil, together with a sufficient Power to obtain the one, and avoid the other. As therefore Man hath sufficient Notices of the moral Government of God, which will at length produce a perfect Coincidence between the virtuous Conduct and the Happiness of every Individual, it implies no essential Defect of Wisdom in the Creator, to suppose that he hath not given this universal and unerring Bias towards Virtue to the whole human Species. Man is enabled to pursue and obtain his proper Happiness by Reason; Brutes by Instinct.

Again, the noble Writer often attempts to strengthen his Argument, by "representing the external Good which naturally flows from Virtue, and the external Evils which naturally attend on Vice." But sure this is rather deserting than confirming his particular Theory; which is, to prove that Happiness is essential to Virtue, and inseparable from it: "That Misery is essential to Vice, and inseparable from it."—Now, in bringing his Proofs from Happiness or Misery of the external Kind, he clearly deserts his original Intention: Because these Externals are not immediate, but...
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They are precisely of the Nature of Reward and Punishment; and therefore can have no Part in the Question now before us; which relates solely to "that Happiness or Misery arising from the inward State of the Mind, Affections, and moral Sense, on the Commission of Vice, or the Practice of Virtue." And this hath been already considered at large.

However, that nothing may be omitted which can even remotely affect the Truth; we may observe, in passing, that after all the laboured and well-meant Declamation on this Subject, 'tis much easier to prove, "that Vice is the Parent of external Misery, than that Virtue is the Parent of external Happiness." 'Tis plain, that no Man can be vicious in any considerable Degree, but he must suffer either in his Health, his Fame, or Fortune. Now the Generality of Moralists, after proving or illustrating this, have taken it for granted, as a certain Consequence, that the external Goods of Life are, by the Law of Contraries, in a similar Manner annexed to the Practice of Virtue. But in Reality the Proof can reach no further than to shew the happy Consequences of Innocence, which is
Essays is a very different Thing from Virtue? for

Innocence is only the abstaining from Evil; Virtue, the actual Production of Good. Now tis evident indeed, that by abstaining from Evil, (that is, by Innocence) we must stand clear of the Miseries to which we expose ourselves by the Commission of it: And this is as far as the Argument will go. But if we rigorously examine the external Consequences of an active Virtue, in such a World as this; we shall find, it must be often maintained at the Expence both of Health, Ease, and Fortune; often the Loss of Friends, and Increase of Enemies; not to mention the unwearied Diligence of Envy, which is ever watchful and prepared to blast distinguished Merit. In the mean time, the innocuous Man sits unmolested and tranquil; loves Virtue, and praiseth it; avoids the Miseries of Vice, and the Fatigue of active Virtue; offends no Man, and therefore is beloved by all; and for the rest, makes it up by fair Words and civil Deportment.

Thus Innocence, and not Virtue; Abstinence from Evil, not the Production of Good, is the furthest Point to which Mankind in general can be carried, from
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"a Regard to the external Consequences of Action."

But whenever Appearances grow too strong against the noble Writer's System, he takes Refuge in an apage Vulgus! As he had before allowed, "that the Vulgar may swallow any sordid Jest or Buffoonry," so here he frequently suggests, that among the same Ranks, "any kind of sordid Pleasure will go down." "But as it must be a finer Kind of Wit that takes with the Men of Breeding," so in Morals the Relish or Taste for Virtue, is what naturally prevails in the higher Stages of Life: That the liberal and polished Part of Mankind are disposed to treat every other Principle of Action as groundless and imaginary: But that among these, the Taste in Morals, if properly cultivated, must needs be sufficient for all the Purposes of Virtue."

In reply to this, which is perhaps the weakest Pretence of all that the noble Writer hath alledged, we need only observe, that those who are born to Honours, Power, and Fortune, come into the World with the

See Misc. 3d. c. 2. and many other detached Passages.
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same various Mixture and Predominancy of Sense, Imaginations, and Affections, with the lowest Ranks of Mankind. So that if they really enjoy better Opportunities of being completely virtuous, these must arise not from their internal Constitution, but their external Situation of Life. Let us examine how far this may give a Bias either towards Vice or Virtue.

Now 'tis plain that, with regard to the Senses or bodily Appetites, the Possession of Power and Fortune must be rather hurtful than favourable to Virtue. Wealth gives Opportunity of Indulgence, and Indulgence naturally inflames. Hence the Habits of sensual Inclination must in general be stronger in the Lord than the Peasant: Therefore, as nothing tends so much to imbrute the Man, and sink every nobler Affection of the Mind, as a servile Attendance on sensual Pleasure; so in this Regard, the Possession of Power and Fortune is rather dangerous than favourable to Virtue.

The same may be affirmed in respect to the Passions or Affections. Can any thing tend so much to render any Passion ungovernable, as to know that we need not govern it? That our Power, Riches, and Authority,
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That we can hate, oppress, revenge, with impunity? Are not the Great, of all others, most obnoxious to Flattery? Does not this tend to produce and nourish an overweening Opinion of themselves, an unjust Contempt of others? and is not true Virtue more likely to be lost than improved, amidst all these surrounding Temptations?

The Imagination indeed is often refined, and Reason improved, in the higher Ranks of Life, beyond the Reach of the mere Vulgar. But they are little acquainted with human Nature, who think that Reason and Imagination, among the Bulk of Mankind, are anything more than the Ministers of the ruling Appetites and Passions: Especially where the Appetites and Passions are inflamed by the early and habitual Possession of Honours, Power, and Riches.

But still it will be urged, that the Great are under the Dominion of a powerful Principle, which is almost unknown among the Vulgar: —— The Principle of Honour —— which is a perfect Balance against all these surrounding Difficulties, and a full Security to Virtue.

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With regard to this boasted Principle, a very material Distinction must be made. By Honour, is sometimes meant "an Affection of Mind determining the Agent to the Practice of what is right, without any Dependance on other Mens Opinions." Now this is but the moral Sense, under a new Appellation: It ariseth too, not from any particular Situation of Life, but from the natural Constitution of the Mind. Accordingly, it is not confined to any one Rank of Men, but is seen promiscuously among the Great and Vulgar. 'Tis therefore entirely beyond the present Question, which only relates to such Circumstances as are peculiar to high Life.

The other, and more common Acceptation of the Word Honour, and in which alone it belongs peculiarly to the Great, is "an Affection of the Mind determining the Agent to such a Conduct, as may gain him the Applause or Esteem of those whose good Opinion he is fond of." Now this Love of Fame, and Fear of Disgrace, though as a secondary Motive to Action, it be often of the highest Consequence in Life; though it often counterfeits, sometimes even rivals Benevolence itself; yet as a prin-
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A principal Motive, there cannot be a more precarious Foundation of Virtue. For the Effects of this Principle will always depend on the Opinions of others: It will always take its particular Complexion from these, and must always vary with them. Thus 'tis a Matter of mere Accident, whether its Consequences be good or bad, wholesome or pernicious. If the applauded Maxims be founded in Benevolence, the Principle will so far lead to Virtue: If they be founded in Pride, Folly, or Contempt, the Principle will lead to Vice. And, without any designed Satire on the Great, it must be owned, the latter of these hath ever been the predominant Character of Honour. It were false indeed to affirm, that the Principle hath no Mixture of benevolent Intention; yet 'tis equally clear, that its chief Design is not so much to secure the Happiness of all, as to maintain the Superiority of a few: And hence this Principle hath ever led its Votaries to abhor the Commission, not so much of what is unjust, as of what is contemptible. Thus it is clear, that the Principle of Honour, as distinguished from benevolent Affection and the moral Sense, can ever be a sufficient
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Sufficient Foundation for the uniform Practice of Virtue.

These are the main Arguments by which the noble Writer hath attempted to support this imagined Allsufficiency of the Relish or Taste in Morals. Had human Nature been indeed that uniform and noble Thing, which he seems to have thought it, he had surely been right in fixing the Motives to Virtue, on so generous and amiable a Principle. But as on Examination it appears, that he hath all along supposed his human Nature to be what it is not, his System is visionary and groundless; and his applauded Theory only fit to find a Place with the boasted Power of the great old Geometer, when he said—σωσίστω, καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐνησώ.

Most full indeed and clear to this Purpose are the Words of the noble Writer himself: Who, in his miscellaneous Capacity, and in a merry Mood, seems to have spoken more of Truth, than, I believe, he would care to stand to.—"Such has been of late our dry Task. No wonder if it carries, indeed, a meagre and raw Appearance, it may be looked on in Philosophy.

"Give me but a Place to set my Foot on, and I will move the whole Earth.

"Sophy;
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"Sophy, as worse than a mere Egyptian Imposition. For to make Brick without Straw or Subble, is perhaps an easier Labour, than to prove Morals without a World, and establish a Conduct of Life, without the Supposition of any Thing living or extant besides our immediate Fancy, or World of Imagination."

These Sallies might possibly have seemed difficult to account for, had not the noble Writer himself saved us the Labour of this Task. For he elsewhere tells us, that all sound Love and Admiration is Enthusiasm: The Transports of Poets, Orators, Musicians, Virtuosi; the Spirit of Travellers and Adventurers; Gallantry, War, Heroism; all, all Enthusiasm! 'Tis enough: I am content to be this new Enthusiast—And thus in another Place he describes the Effects of this high Passion: That Enthusiasm is wonderfully powerful and extensive:—For when the Mind is taken up in Vision,—its Horror, Delight, Confusion, Fear, Admiration, or whatever Passion belongs to it, or is uppermost on this Occasion, will have something vast, immane, and, as Painters say, Beyond...
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HAVING sufficiently evinced the flimsy, though curious, Contexture of these Cobweb Speculations spun in the Closet, let us now venture abroad into the World; let us proceed to something applicable to Life and Manners; and consider what are the real Motives, by which Mankind may be sway'd to the uniform Practice of Virtue.

And first, in Minds of a gentle and generous Disposition, where the sensual Appetites are weak, the Imagination refined, and the benevolent Affections naturally predominant; these very Affections, and the moral Sense arising from them, will in all the common Occurrences of Life secure the Practice of Virtue. To these fine Tempers thus happily formed, the inward Satisfaction of a virtuous Conduct exceeds that of every outward Acquisition; and affords to its Possessor a more true and lasting Happiness,
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Secondly, Where the same Degrees of public Affection subsist, but stand opposed by sensual or selfish Passions of equal Violence, even here the Agent may rise to very high Degrees of Virtue, but not without the Aids of Discipline and Culture. Yet 'tis observble, that the Virtues of such a Temper are rather conspicuous than consistent: Without some strengthening Assistance, the Progress of the Mind towards Perfection is often broke by the Sallies of disordered Passion.

There is yet another Character, essentially different from these, but seldom distinguished, because generally taken for the first. Many esteem themselves, and are esteemed by others, as having arrived at the most consummate Virtue, whose Conduct never merits a higher Name than that of being innoxious. This is generally the Case of those who love Retreat and Contemplation, of those whose Passions are naturally weak, or carefully guarded by what the World calls Prudence. Now, as in the last mentioned Character, a Curb from Irregularity was requisite, so here a Spur to Action is equally necessary.
necessary for the Support and Security of Virtue.

As we descend through more common and inferior Characters, the internal Motives to virtuous Actions grow less and less effectual. Weak or no Benevolence, a moral Sense proportionably dull, strong sensual Appetites, a clamorous Train of selfish Affections, these mixed and varied in endless Combinations, form the real Character of the Bulk of Mankind: Not only in Cottages, but in Cities, Churches, Camps, and Courts. So that some stronger Ties, some Motives more efficacious are necessary, not only for the Perfection of Virtue, but the Welfare, nay, the very Being of Society.

'Tis not denied, nay, 'tis meant and insisted on, that among all these various Characters and Tempers, the Culture of the benevolent Affections ought to be assiduously regarded. For though we have seen that the Design of introducing an universal high Relish or Taste for Virtue be visionary and vain, yet still a lower, or a lower Degree may possibly be instilled. We have only attempted to prove, that the Capacity for this high Taste in Morals is not universally or essentially interwoven with the human Frame,
Frame, but dispensed in various Degrees, in the same Manner as the Capacity for a Taste in inferior Beauties, in Architecture, Painting, Poetry, and Music.

To remedy this Defect of unerring Instinct in Man, by which he becomes a Creature so much less consistent than the Brute Kinds, Providence hath afforded him not only a Sense of present, but a Foresight of future Good and Evil.

Hence the Force of human Laws; which being established by common Consent, for the Good of all, endeavour, so far as their Power can reach, by the Infliction of Punishment on Offenders, to establish the general Happiness of Society, by making the acknowledged Interest of every Individual to coincide and unite with the public Welfare.

But as human Laws cannot reach the Heart of Man; as they can only inflict Punishment on Offenders, but cannot bestow Rewards on the Obedient; as there are many Duties of imperfect Obligation which they cannot recognize; as Force will sometimes defy, and Cunning often elude their Power; so without some further Aids, some Motives to Action more universally interest-
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Essaying. Virtue must still be left betrayed and deserted.

Now as it is clear from the Course of these Observations, that nothing can work this great Effect, but what can produce "an entire and universal Coincidence between private and public Happiness;" so is it equally evident, that nothing can effectually convince Mankind, that their own Happiness universally depends on procuring, or at least not violating the Happiness of others, save only "the lively and active Belief of an all-seeing and all-powerful God, "who will hereafter make them happy or "miserable, according as they designedly "promote or violate the Happiness of their "Fellow-Creatures." And this is the Essence of Religion.

This, at first View, should seem a Motive or Principle of Action, sufficient for all the Purposes of Happiness and Virtue. Indeed the Bulk of Mankind seem agreed in this Truth. Yet refining Tempers, who love to quit the common Tracks of Opinion, have been bold enough to call even this in Question. Among these, the noble Writer hath been one of the most diligent:
It will therefore be necessary to consider the Weight of his Objections.

To prevent Misinterpretation, it may be proper to observe, that Lord Shaftesbury sometimes talks in earnest of the Nobleness and Dignity of Religion. But when he explains himself, it appears, he confines his Idea of it to that Part which consists solely in Gratitude to, and Adoration of the Supreme Being, without any Prospect of future Happiness or Misery. Now, though indeed this be the noblest Part, yet it is beyond the Reach of all, save only those who are capable of the most exalted Degrees of Virtue. His Theory of Religion therefore is precisely of a Piece, with his Theory of the moral Sense; not calculated for Use, but Admiration; and only existing in the Place where they had their Birth, that is, as the noble Writer well expresses it, in a Mind taken up in Vision.

He sometimes talks, or seems to talk, in earnest too, on the Usefulness of Religion, in the common Acceptation of the World. With regard to which 'tis only necessary to observe, that whatever he hath said on this Subject I readily assent to: But this is no Reason why it may not be necessary to obviate...
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Essay viate every thing he hath thrown out to the contrary, to prejudice common Readers against Religion, through the Vanity of being thought Original. To invent what is just or useful, is the Character of Genius: 'Tis a far different Thing, to broach Absurdities.

First, therefore, he often asserts, that "the Hope of future Reward and Fear of future Punishment is utterly unworthy of the free Spirit of a Man, and only fit for those who are destitute of the very first Principles of common Honesty: He calls it miserable, vile, mercenary: And compares those who allow it any Weight, to Monkies under the Discipline of the Whip."

In Answer to these general Cavils (probably aimed chiefly at Revelation) which are only difficult to confute, as they are vague and fugitive, let it be observed, first, that whatever can be objected against religious Fear, holds good against the Fear of human Laws. They both threaten the Delinquent with the Infliction of Punishment, nor is the Fear of the one more unworthy, than of the other. Yet the noble Writer himself
himself often speaks with the highest Respet of Legislators, of the Founders of Society and Empire, who, by the Establishment of wise and wholesome Laws, drew Mankind from their State of natural Barbarity, to that of cultivated Life and social Happiness: Unless indeed he supposes that Orpheus and the rest of them did their Business literally by Taste and a Fiddle. If therefore the just Fear of human Power might be inforced without insulting or violating the Generosity of our Nature, whence comes it, that a just Fear of the Creator should so miserably degrade the Species? The religious Principle holds forth the same Motive to Action, and only differs from the other, as the Evil it threatens is infinitely greater and more lasting.

**Further:** If we consider the religious Principle in its true Light, there is nothing in it either mean, mean, or unworthy. To be in a Fright indeed, to live under the Suggestions of perpetual Terror (in which, the noble Writer would persuade us, the religious Principle consists) is far from an amiable Condition. But this belongs only to the Superflitious or the Guilty. The first of these are falsely religious; and to the last I imagine...
imagine the noble Writer's most zealous Admirers will acknowledge, it ought to belong. But to the rest of Mankind, the religious Principle or Fear of God is of a quite different Nature. It only implies a lively and habitual Belief, that we shall be hereafter miserable, if we disobey his Laws. Thus every wise Man, nay, every Man of common Understanding, hath a like Fear of every possible Evil; of the destructive Power of natural Agents, of Fire, Water, Serpents, Poison: Yet none of these Fears, more than the religious one, imply a State of perpetual Misery and Apprehension: None of them are inconsistent with the most generous Temper of Mind, or truest Courage. None of them imply more than a rational Sense of these several Kinds of Evil; and from that Sense, a Determination to avoid them. Thus the noble Writer himself, when it answers a different Purpose, acknowledges, that "a Man of Courage may be cautious without real Fear." Now the word Caution, in its very Nature, implies a Sense of a Possibility of Evil, and from that Sense a Determination to avoid it: Which is the very

"Enquiry, B. ii. Part ii. § 3."
On the Motives to Virtue.

Essence of the religious Principle or the Sect. IX.

And as to the other Branch of religious Principle, "the Hope and Prospect of higher Degrees of future Happiness and Perfection:" What is there of mean, slavish, or unworthy in it? Are all Mankind to be blown up into the Mock-majesty of the kingly Stoic, seated on the Throne of Arrogance, and lording it in an empty Region of Chimaera's? Is not the Prospect of Happiness the great universal Hinge of human Action? Do not all the Powers of the Soul centre in this one Point? Doth not the noble Writer himself elsewhere acknowledge this; and that our Obligations to Virtue itself can only arise from this one Principle, that it gives us real Happiness? Why then should the Hope of a happy Immortality be branded as base and slavish, while the Consciousness or Prospect of a happy Life on Earth is regarded as a just and honourable Motive?

The noble Writer indeed confesseth, that if, by the Hope of Reward, be understood the Love and Desire (he ought to have said, the Hope) of virtuous Enjoyment, it

See above, Sect. VI. of this Essay
is not derogatory to Virtue." But that in every other Sense, the indulged Hope of Reward is not only mean and mercenary, but even hurtful to Virtue and common Humanity: "For in this religious Sort of Discipline, the Principle of Self-Love, which is naturally so prevailing in us (indeed?) being no way moderated or restrained, but rather improved and made stronger every Day, by the Exercise of the Passions in the Subject of more extended Self-Interest; there may be Reason to apprehend lest the Temper of this Kind should extend itself in general through all the Parts of Life."

This, to say the best of it, is the very Phrenzy of Virtue. Religion proposeth true Happiness as the End and Consequence of virtuous Action: This is granted. It proposeth it by such Motives as must influence Self-Love, and consequently hath given the best Means of procuring it. Yet, it seems, Self-love being not restrained, but made stronger, will make Mankind miss of true Happiness. That is, by leading Self-Love into the Path of true Happiness, Religion will inevitably conduct it to a false; by commanding us to cherish our public Affections,
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Affections, it will certainly inflame the private ones; by assuring us, that if we would be happy hereafter, we must be virtuous and benevolent; it will beyond question render us vile and void of Benevolence. But this Mode of Reasoning is common with the noble Writer.

However, at other Times his Lordship can descend to the Level of common Sense; and prosecute his Argument by Proofs diametrically opposite to what he here advanceth. For in displaying the Motives to Virtue, after having modelled the inward State of the human Mind according to his own Imagination, he proceeds to consider the Passions which regard ourselves, and draws another and indeed a stronger Proof from these.---He there proves the Folly of a vicious Love of Life, "because Life itself may often prove a Misfortune." So of Cowardice, "because it often robs us of the Means of Safety."---Excessive Sentiment, "because the Gratification is no more than an Alleviation of a racking Pain."---The Vice of Luxury "creates a Nauseating, and Distaste, Diseases, and constant Craving." He urges the same

*Objections*
Objections against intemperate Pleasure of the amorous Kind. He observes that Ambition is ever "suspicious, jealous, captious, and uncapable of bearing the least Disappointment." He then proceeds thro' a Variety of other Passions, proving them all to be the Sources of some internal or external Misery. Thus he awakens the same Passions of Hope and Fear, which, in a religious View, he so bitterly inveighs against. Thus he exhibits a Picture of future Rewards and Punishments, even of the most selfish Kind: He recommends the Conformity to Virtue, on the Score both of present and future Advantage: He deters his Reader from the Commission of Vice, by representing the Misery it will produce. And these too, such Advantages and such Miseries, as are entirely distinct from the mere Feeling of virtuous Affection or its contrary: From the Considerations of Safety, Alleviation of bodily Pain, the Avoidance of Disasters and Diseases. Now doth not his own Cavil here recoil upon him? "That in this Sort of Discipline, and by exhibiting such Motives as these, the Principle of Self-Love must be made stronger, by the Exercise of the Passions in a Sub
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ject of more extended Self-Interest: And so there may be Reason to apprehend, lest the Temper of this Kind should extend itself in general through all the Parts of Life.” Thus the Objection proves equally against both: In Reality, against neither. For, as we have seen, the Sense, or Prospect of Happiness, is the only possible Motive to Action; and if we are taught to believe that virtuous Affection will produce Happiness, whether the expected Happiness lies in this Life or another, it will tend, and equally tend, to produce virtuous Affection. The noble Writer, therefore, and his Admirers, might as well attempt to remove Mountains, as to prove that the Hope and Prospect of a happy Immortality, can justly be accounted more servile, mercenary, or hurtful, than the View of those transient and earthly advantages, which his Lordship hath so rhetorically and honestly display’d, for the Interest and Security of Virtue. In Truth, they are precisely of the same Nature and only differ in Time, Duration, and Degree. They are both established by our Creator for the same great End of Happiness. And what God hath thus connected,
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it were absurd, as well as impious, to attempt to separate.

There is yet another Circumstance observable in human Nature, which still further proves, that the Hope of a happy Immortality hath no Tendency to produce selfish Affection, but its contrary. For let the stoical Tribe draw what Pictures they please of the human Species, this is an undoubted Truth, "that Hope is the most universal source of human Happiness: And

Hence we may see the Weakness and Mistake of those falsely religious, who fall into an Extreme directly opposite to this of the noble Writer; who are scandalized at our being determined to the Pursuit of Virtue through any Degree of Regard to its happy Consequences in this Life; which Regard they call worldly, carnal, profane. For it is evident, that the religious Motive is precisely of the same Kind; only stronger, as the Happiness expected is greater, and more lasting. While therefore we set the proper and proportioned Value upon each, it is impossible we can act irrationally, or offend that God, who established both.

This naturally leads to a further Observation, which shews the Danger, as well as Folly, of groveling in Systems. Virtue, we see, comes recommended and enforced on three Principles. It is attended with natural and immediate Pleasure or Advantage:—It is commanded by human Laws:---It is enjoined by Religion. ---Yet the Religionists have often decry'd the first of these Sanctions: The fanatical Moralists, the last: And even the second hath not escaped the Madness of an enthusiastic Party; which, however, never grew considerable enough in this Kingdom, to merit Confutation.
"that Man is never so sincerely and heartily benevolent, as when he is truly happy in himself." Thus the high Consciousness of his being numbered among the Children of God, and that his Lot is among the Saints; that he is destined to an endless Progression of Happiness, and to rise from high to higher Degrees of Perfection, must needs inspire him with that Tranquillity and Joy, which will naturally diffuse itself in Acts of sincere Benevolence to all his Fellow-Creatures, whom he looks upon as his Companions in this Race of Glory. Thus will every noble Passion of the Soul be awakened into Action: While the joyless Infidel, possessed with the gloomy Dread of Annihilation, too naturally contracts his Affections as his Hopes of Happiness decrease; while he considers and despiseth himself, and his Fellow-Creatures, as no more than the Beasts that perish.

The noble Writer indeed insinuates, that "there is "a certain Narrowsness of Spirit, "occasioned by this Regard to a future "Life, peculiarly observable in the devout "Persons and Zealots of almost every reli-
"gious Persuasion." In reply to which,
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Essa y. It is only necessary to affirm, what may be affirmed with Truth, that with regard to devout Persons the Insinuation is a Falsehood. It was prudently done, indeed, to join the Zealots (or Bigots) in the same Sentence, because it is true, that these; being under the Dominion of Superstition, forget the true Nature and End of Religion; and are therefore scrupulously exact in the Observation of outward Ceremonies, while they neglect the superior and essential Matters of the Law, of Justice, Benevolence, and Mercy.

And as to the Notion of confining the Hope of future Reward to "that of virtuous Enjoyment only:" This is a Refinement parallel to the rest of the noble Writer's System; and, like all Refinements, contracts instead of enlarging our Views. 'Tis allowed indeed, that the Pleasures of Virtue are the highest we know of in our present State; and 'tis therefore commonly supposed, they may constitute our chief Felicity in another. But doth it hence follow, that no other Sources of Happiness may be dispensed, which as yet are utterly unknown to us? Can our narrow and partial Imagination set Bounds to the Omnipotence of God? And may not our Creator vouchsafe us...
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us such Springs of yet untasted Bliss, as shall exceed even the known Joys of Virtue, as far as these exceed the Gratifications of Sense? Nay, if we consider, what is generally believed, that our Happiness will arise from an Addition of new and higher Faculties; that in the present Life, the Exercise of Virtue itself ariseth often from the Imperfection of our State; if we consider these Things, it should seem highly probable, that our future Happiness will consist in something quite beyond our present Comprehension: Will be "such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive."

SECTION X.

BUT beyond these Objections, the noble Writer hath more than once touched upon another, which merits a particular Consideration. For he affirms, that "after all, 'tis not merely what we call Principle, but a Taste, which governs Men." That "even Conscience, such as is owing to religious Discipline, will make but a flight Figure, where this Taste is set amidst."

* Mist. iii. c.ii.
THE Notion here advanced is not peculiar to himself. He seems to have drawn it from a much more considerable Writer, who hath endeavoured to support the same Proposition by a great Variety of Examples. Several Authors of inferior Rank have borrowed the same Topic, for popular Declaration. Nay, one hath gone so far as to assert, "that Man is so unaccountable a Creature, as to act most commonly against his Principle."

The Objection, indeed, carries an Appearance of Force: Yet on a near Examination it entirely vanisheth.

It must be owned, that in most Countries, a considerable Part of what is called Religion, deserves no other Name than that of Absurdity made sacred. And it were strange indeed, should Bigotry and false Religion produce that Uprightness of Heart, that Perfection of Morals, which is the genuine Effect of Truth.

It must be owned, that with Regard to religious Principle, as well as moral Practice, every Man has the Power of being a Hypocrite. That Knaves, in order to be

1 Bayle, Pens. sur une Comete.
² Fable of the Bee.

accounted
accounted honest, may appear devout. And we may reasonably suppose, if we consider the innumerable Artifices of Villany, that the outward Profession of Religion becomes a frequent Disguise to an atheistical and corrupted Heart.

But though these Circumstances may sufficiently account for the Appearance in many particular Cases, yet, with Regard to the general Fact, here seems to lie the proper Solution of the Difficulty. "That even " where true Religion is known, professed, " and in Speculation assented to, it is seldom " so thoroughly inculcated as to become a " Principle of Action." We have seen that Imagination is the universal Instrument of human Action; that no Passion can be strongly excited in the Soul by mere Knowledge or Assent, till the Imagination hath formed to itself some kind of Picture or Representation of the Good or Evil apprehended. Now the Senses and their attendant Passions are continually urging their Demands, through the immediate Presence of their respective Objects: So that nothing but the vivid Image of some greater Good or Evil in Futurity can possibly resist and

\* See above, Essay i. § 3.
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overbalance their Sollicitations. The Idea therefore of future Happiness and Misery must be strongly impressed on the Imagination, ere they can work their full Effects, because they are distant and unseen: But this Habit of Reflection is seldom properly fixed by Education; and thus for want of a proper Impression, "religious Principle is seldom gained, and therefore seldom operates."

But where a sincere and lively Impression takes place; where the Mind is convinced of the Being of a God; that he is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him; where the Imagination hath gained a Habit of connecting this great Truth with every Thought, Word, and Action; there it may be justly affirmed, that Piety and Virtue cannot but prevail. To say, in a Case of this Nature, that Man will not act according to his Principle, is to contradict the full Evidence of known Facts. We see how true Mankind commonly are to their Principle of Pride, or mistaken Honour; how true to their Principle of Avarice, or mistaken Interest; how true to their Principle of a Regard to human Laws. Why are they so? Because they have strongly and habitually
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tually connected these Principles in their Imagination with the Idea of their own Happiness. Therefore, whenever the religious Principle becomes in the same Manner habitually connected in the Imagination, with the Agent's Happiness; that is, whenever the religious Principle takes place at all, it must needs become infinitely more powerful than any other; because the Good it promiseth, and the Evil it threatens, are infinitely greater and more lasting. Hence it appears, that the Corruption of Mankind, even where the purest Religion is professed, and in Theory assented to, doth not arise from the Want of religious Principle, but the Want of it.

And indeed on other Occasions, and to serve different Purposes, the noble Writer and his Partizans can allow and give Examples of all that is here contended for. Nothing is so common among these Gentlemen, as to declaim against the terrible Effects of priestly Power. 'Tis the favourite Topic, to represent Mankind as groaning under the Tyranny of the sacred Order. Now what does this Representation imply, but "the Force of religious Principle im-
properly directed?" If Mankind can be

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swayed
Swayed by religious Hope and Fear, to resign their Passions and Interests to the Artifice, or Advantage of the Priest, why not to the Benefit of Mankind? 'Tis only impressing a different Idea of Duty: The Motive to Action is in both Cases the same, and consequently must be of equal Efficacy. Thus if religious Principle were void of Force, the Priesthood must be void of Power. The Influence therefore of the Priesthood, however dishonestly applied, is a Demonstration of the Force of religious Principle.

This therefore seems to be the Truth. Although, by timely and continued Culture, the religious Principle might be made more universally predominant; yet even as it is, though not so thoroughly inculcated as to become generally a consistent Principle of Action; in Fact it hath a frequent and considerable, though partial and imperfect influence. None but the thoroughly Good and Bad act on continued or consistent Principles; all the intermediate Degrees of Good and Bad act at different Times on various and inconsistent Principles; that is, their Imaginations are by turns given up to Impressions of a different, or even
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even contrary Nature. This explains the whole Mystery: For, hence it appears that the consistent or inconsistent Conduct of Men depends not on the Nature of their Principles, but on having their Principles, whatever they are, *counteracted* by opposite ones. Although therefore, through a Failure of timely Discipline, Numbers of Men appear to be of that capricious Temper as not to be steady to any Principle, yet still the religious one will *mix* with the rest, and naturally *prevail* in its Turn. This is certainly a common Circumstance among the looser and more inconsiderate Ranks of Men; who, although by no means uniformly *swayed* by the Precepts of Religion, are yet frequently *struck* with Horror at the Thought of Actions peculiarly vile, and deterred by the Apprehension of an all-seeing God from the commission of Crimes *uncommonly atrocious*.

Here then lies the essential Difference between the Efficacy of Taste and religious Principle: That the first, being a Feeling or Perception dispensed in various Degrees, and in very weak ones to the Bulk of Mankind, is incapable, even through the most assiduous Culture, of becoming an universal
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or consistent Motive to Virtue: But the religious Principle, arising from such Passions, as are common to the whole Species, must, if properly inculcated, universally prevail.

'Tis evident therefore, that in the very first Dawns of Reason, Religious Principles ought to be impressed on the Minds of Children; and this early Culture continued through the succeeding Stages of Life. But as the noble Writer hath strangely attempted to ridicule and dishonour Religion in every Shape; so here, he hath endeavoured to throw an Odium on this Method of religious Discipline, by representing it as the Enemy to true Morals and practical Philosophy, as it fetters the Mind with early Prejudices. "Whatever Manner in Philosophy happens to bear the least Resemblance to that of Catechism, cannot, I am persuaded, of itself seem very inviting. Such a smart Way of questioning ourselves in our Youth, has made our Manhood more averse to the expository Discipline: And though the metaphysical Points of our Belief, are by this Method with admirable Care and Caution instilled into tender Minds; yet the Manner of this anticipating Philosophy may make the
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the After-work of Reason, and the inward Exercise of the Mind at a riper Age, proceed the more heavily, and with greater Reluctance. 'Tis hard, after having by so many pertinent Interrogatories and decisive Sentences, declared who and what we are; to come leisurely in another, to inquire concerning our real Self and End, the Judgment we are to make of Interest, and the Opinion we should have of Advantage and Good: Which is what must necessarily determine us in our Conduct, and prove the leading Principle of our Lives.'

In reply to this most philosophical Paragraph, let it be observed, that it is not the Design of Religion to make Sophists, but good Subjects of Mankind. That Man being designed, not for Speculation, but Action, religious Principle is not to be instilled in a philosophical but a moral View: Therefore with Regard to Practice, nothing can be more fit and rational than to impress acknowledged Truths at an Age when the Recipient is incapable of their Demonstrations; in the same Manner as we teach the Me-

Advice, &c. Part iii. § 2.
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Essays, to work on Geometric Principles, while the Proofs are unknown to him.

But then, the Prejudices of Education—yes, these are the great Stumbling-block to a modern Free-thinker: It still runs in his Head, that all Mankind are born to dispute de omni scibili ⁴. Let therefore this minute Philosopher reflect, first, that a Prejudice doth not imply, as is generally supposed, the Falsehood of the Opinion instilled; but only that it is taken up and held without its proper Evidence. Thus a Child may be prejudiced in Favour of Truth, as well as Falsehood; and in him neither the one nor the other can properly be called more than an Opinion. Further: The human Mind cannot remain in a State of Indifference, with regard either to Opinion or Practice: 'Tis of an active Nature; and, like a fertile Field, if by due Cultivation it be not made to produce good Fruit, will certainly spring up in Tares and Thistles. Impressions, Opinions, Prejudices, of one kind or other a Child will inevitably contract, from the Things and Persons that surround him: and if rational Habits and Opinions be not infused, in order to anticipate Absurdities;

⁴ On all Subjects.

Absur-
Absurdities will rise, and anticipate all rational Habits and Opinions. His Reason and his Passions will put themselves in Action, however untoward and inconsistent, in the same manner as his Limbs will make an Effort towards progressive Motion, however awkward and absurd. The same Objection therefore that lies against instilling a salutary Opinion, will arise against teaching him to walk erect: For this too, is a kind of "anticipating Philosophy." And sure, a Child left to his own Self-Discipline, "till he could come leisurely to inquire concerning his real Self and End," would stand as fair a Chance to grovel in Absurdity, and bring down his Reason to the sordid Level of Appetite, as to crawl upon all four, and dabble in the Dirt. Thus the noble Writer's Ridicule would sweep away the whole System of Education along with the religious Principle: Not an Opinion or Inclination must be controverted, or so much as controverted; "left by this anticipating Philosophy, the Work of Reason, and the inward Exercise of the Mind, at a riper Age, should proceed the more heavily, and with greater Reluctance." The Caprice of Infancy must rule us, till the very Capacity
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Capacity of Improvement should be destroyed; and we must turn Savages, in order to be made perfect in the sovereign Philosophy!

'Tis no difficult Matter therefore to determine whether a Child should be left to the Follies of his own weak Understanding and nascent Passions; be left to imbibe the Maxims of corrupt Times and Manners; Maxims which, setting aside all Regard to their speculative Truth or Falsehood, do lead to certain Misery; or, on the other hand, shall be happily conducted to embrace those religious Principles, which have had the Approbation of the best and wisest Men in every Age and Nation; and which are known and allowed to be the only Means of true Happiness to Individuals, Families, and States.

This therefore ought to be the early and principal Care of those who have the Tuition of Youth: And they will soon find the happy Effects of their Instruction. For as the Child's Understanding shall improve, what was at first instilled only as an Opinion, will by Degrees be embraced as Truth: Reason will then assume her just Empire; and the great, universal, religious Principle, a rati-
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a rational Obedience to the Will of God, will raise him to his utmost Capacity of moral Perfection; will be a wide and firm Foundation, on which the whole Fabric of Virtue may rise in its just Proportions; will extend and govern his Benevolence and moral Sense; will strengthen them, if weak; will confirm them, if strong; will supply their Want, if naturally defective: In fine, will direct all his Passions to their proper Objects and Degrees; and, as the great Master-spring of Action, at once promote and regulate every Movement of his Heart.

It must be owned, the noble Writer's Caution against this "anticipating Philo-

sophy" hath of late been deeply imbibed. In consequence of it, we have seen religious Principle declaimed against, ridiculed, lamented. The Effect of this hath been, an abandoned Degree of Villainy in one Class of Mankind; a lethargic Indifference towards Virtue or Vice in another; and in the third, which boasts the Height of modern Virtue, we seldom see more than the first natural Efforts, the mere Buddings of Benevolence and Honour, which are too generally blasted ere they can ripen into Action. This Contempt of Religion hath
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hath always been a fatal Omen to free States. Nor, if we may credit Experience, can we entertain any just Hope, that this fantastic Scheme, this boasted Relish for Beauty and Virtue, can ever give Security to Empire, without the more solid Supports of religious Belief. For it is remarkable, that in the Decline of both the Greek and Roman States, after Religion had lost its Credit and Efficacy, this very Taste, this sovereign Philosophy usurped its Place, and became the common Study and Amusement (as it is now among ourselves) both of the Vile and Vulgar. The Fact, with regard to Greece, is sufficiently notorious; with regard to Rome, it may seem to demand a Proof. And who would think, that Quintilian in the following Passage was not describing our own Age and Nation? "Nunc autem quae vel-" ut propria philosophiae asseruntur, passim "tractamus omnes: Quis enim modo de "Justo, aequo, ac bono, non et vir "pessimus loquitur?" --- What was formerly the Philosopher's Province only, is now invaded by all: We find every wicked and worthless Fellow, in these Days, haranguing on Virtue, Beauty, and Good. What

*Quint. Proemium.*
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this Leprosy of false Knowledge may end in, I am unwilling to say: But this may be said with Truth, because it is justified by Experience; that along with the Circumstance now remarked, every other Symptom is rising among us, that hath generally attended the dark and troubled Evening of a Commonwealth.

Doubtless, many will treat these Apprehensions with Derision: But this Derision is far from being an Evidence of their Falsehood. For no People ever fell a Sacrifice to themselves, till lulled and infatuated by their own Passions. Blind Security is an essential Characteristic of a People devoted to destruction. The Fact is equally undeniable, whether it ariseth from the moral Appointment of Providence, or the Connexion of natural Causes. Though this is seen and acknowledged by those who are conversant with the History of Mankind; yet 'tis hard to convey this Evidence to those who seldom extend their Views beyond their own short Period of Existence; because they see the Prevalence of the Cause assigned, while yet the pretended Consequence appears not. But they who look back into ancient Time are convinced, that the public Effects of
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Of Irreligion have never been sudden or immediate. One Age is falsely polite, irreligious, and vile; the next is sunk in servitude and wretchedness. This is analogous to the operation of other causes. A man may be intemperate for twenty years, before he feels the effects of intemperance on his constitution. The sun and moon raise the tides; yet the tides rise not to their height, till a considerable time after the conjunction of these two luminaries. We cannot therefore justly decide concerning the future effects of irreligion, from its present state. The examples of former times are a much better criterion: and these are such, as ought to make every man among us, that regards posterity, tremble for his posterity while he reads them.

For this is but too just an epitome of the story of mankind. That tyranny and superstition have ever gone hand in hand; mutually supporting and supported; taking their progress, and fixing their dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth; overwhelming it in one general deluge, as the waters cover the sea. Here and there a happy nation emerges; breathes for a while in the enlightened region of knowledge,
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Till, in their appointed Time, Irreligion and Licentiousness appear; mine the Foundations of the Fabric, and sink it in the general Abyss of Ignorance and Oppression.

Possibly the fatal Blow may yet be averted from us. 'Tis surely the Duty of every Man, in every Station, to contribute his Share, however inconsiderable, to this great End. This must be my Apology for opposing the noble Writer's fantastic System; which by exhibiting a false Picture of human Nature, is, in Reality, an Inlet to Vice, while it seems most favourable to Virtue: And while it pretends to be drawn from the Depths of Philosophy, is, of all others, most unphilosophical.
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Characteristics, etc.

ESSAY III.
On Revealed Religion, and Christianity.

SECTION I.

In the Course of the preceding Essay, we have seen the noble Writer assuming the Character of the professed Dogmatist, the Reasoner in Form. In what remains to be considered, concerning Revealed Religion and Christianity, we shall find him chiefly affecting the miscellaneous Capacity;
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city; the Way of Chat, Raillery, Innuendo, or Story-telling: In a word, that very Species of the present modish Composition, which he so contemptuously ridicules; "where, as he tells us, Justice and Accuracy of Thought are set aside as too constraining; where Grounds and Foundations are of no Moment; and which hath properly neither Top nor Bottom, Beginning nor End."

In this, however, his Lordship is not quite so much to blame as might be imagined. In his Critical Progress, he had treated this dishonest of Composition, as the Man in the Fable did his Pears; unconscious he should be ever afterwards reduced to diet on them himself. The Truth of the Matter is, that the broken Hints, the ambiguous Expression, and the Ludicrous of the gentle Essayist, perfectly secure him from the rough Handling of the Logical-Disputer.

Indeed the noble Author has a double Advantage from this Cloud, in which the Graces so frequently secure their Favourite. He not only eludes the Force of every Argument the Defenders of Christianity alledge in its Support, but even pleads the Privilege of being

* See above, Essay i. § 2.
being ranked in the Number of sincere Christians, He takes frequent Occasions of expressing his Abhorrence of idle Scepticks and wicked Unbelievers in Religion: He declares himself of a more refined Understanding, a ductile Faith, ready to be moulded into any shape that his spiritual superiors shall prescribe. At other Times, and in innumerable Places, he scatters such Insinuations against Christianity, and that too with all the Bitterness of Sarcasm and Invective, as must needs be more effectual in promoting Irreligion, than a formal and avowed Accusation. For in the Way of open War, there is fair Warning given to put Reason upon Guard, that no pretending Argument be suffered to pass without Examination. On the contrary, the noble Writer's concealed Method of Raillery, steals insensibly on his Reader; fills him with endless Prejudice and Suspicion; and, without passing thro' the Judgment, fixeth such Impressions on the Imagination, as Reason, with all its Effects, will be hardly able afterwards to efface.

These inconsistent Circumstances in his Lordship's Conduct, have made it a Question among some, what his real Sentiments were concerning Religion and Christianity.
If it be necessary to decide this Question, we may observe, that a disguised Unbeliever may have his Reasons for making a formal Declaration of his Assent to the Religion of his Country: But it will be hard to find what should tempt a real Christian to load Christianity with Scorn and Infamy. Indeed, the noble Writer, to do him Justice, never designed to leave us at a Loss on this Subject. For he hath been so good, frequently to remind his Reader, to look out for the true Drift of his I irony, lest his real Meaning should be mistaken or disregarded.

Here then lies the Force of his Lordship's Attack on Christianity; "In exciting Contempt by Ridicule." A Method which, as we have already seen, tho' devoid of all rational Foundation, is yet most powerful and efficacious in working upon vulgar Minds. Thus the Way of I irony and false Encomium, which he so often employs against the blessed Founder of our Religion, serves him for all Weapons; the deeper he strikes the wound, the better he shields himself.

We are not therefore to be surprized, if we find the noble Writer frequently affecting a Mixture of solemn Phrase and low Buffoonry.

b Essay i. passim.
and Christianity. Buffoonry; not only in the same Tract, but in the same Paragraph. In this Respect, he resembles the facetious Drole I have somewhere heard of, who wore a transparent Masque: Which, at a Distance, exhibited a Countenance wrapt up in profound Solemnity; but those who came nearer, and could see to the Bottom, found the native Look distorted into all the ridiculous Grimace, which Spleen and Vanity could imprint.

SECTION II.

But as natural Religion is the only Foundation of revealed; it will be necessary, ere we proceed to the last, to obviate any Insinuations which the noble Writer may have thrown out against the Former.

As to the Expectation of future Happiness considered, as the natural Consequence of virtuous Action; his Lordship hath not, that I know of, either affirmed, or insinuated any thing against its Reasonableness. But with regard to the other Branch of Religion, "the Belief of a future State of Misery or Punishment, considered as the ap- pointed Consequence of Vice," this he hath
hath frequently endeavoured to discredit in such a Manner as would be no small Degree of Guilt to transcribe, were it not to shew at once the Impiety and Falsehood of his Affirmations.

In his Letter on Enthusiasm, he hath obliged us with several Passages of this Kind. These, it must be owned, are so obscure, that we must be content, to refer them rather to the Reader's equitable Construction, than urge them as direct Proofs.

The Apprehension and Fear of something supernatural, so universal among Mankind, he seems all along to deride, as a visionary and groundless Panic. He adds that, "while some Sects, such as the Pythagorean and latter Platonick, joined in with the Superstition and Enthusiasm of the Times; the Epicurean, the Academic and others, were allowed to use all the Force of Wit and Raillery against it."

To convince us how much he approves the Conduct of these libertine Sects, he boldly follows their Example. He assures us that "such is the Nature of the liberal, polished and refined Part of Mankind; so far are they from the mere Simplicity of..."
and Christianity.

Babes and Sucklings; that, instead of applying the Notion of a future Reward or Punishment, to their immediate Behaviour in Society; they are apt much rather, thro' the whole Course of their Lives, to shew evidently, that they look on the pious Narrations to be indeed no better than Children's Tales, and the Amusement of the mere Vulgar." He confirms these Opinions by assigning the Reason why Men of Sense should stand clear of the Fears of a Futurity: "God is so good, as to exceed the very best of us in Goodness: And after this Manner we can have no Dread or Suspicion to render us uneasy; for it is Malice only, and not Goodness, which can make us afraid."

Is this the Philosopher and Patriot, the Lover of his Country and Mankind! This the Admirer of ancient Wisdom, of venerable Sages, who founded "Laws, Constitutions, civil and religious Rites, whatever civilizes or polishes Mankind."

Tu Pater et Rerum inventor! Tu patria nobis Suppeditas præcepta!

This, sure, is unhinging Society to the utmost.
utmost of his Power: For the Force of religious Sentiments depends as much on their being believed, as the Force of human Laws depends on their being executed. To destroy the Belief of the one therefore, is equivalent to suspending the other.

But as the present Debate concerns not the Utility, but the Truth of Religion, 'tis chiefly incumbent on us, to shew, that the noble Writer's Opinion and Reasoning, on this Subject, are void of all Foundation.

'Tis observable therefore, First, that his Lordship, in other Places, allows, that "If there be naturally such a Passion as Enthusiasm, 'tis evident, that Religion itself is of the kind, and must be natural therefore to Man." And in his Letter on Enthusiasm, even while he derides the Proneness of Mankind to the conscientious Fear, he adds, "that tho' Epicurus thought these Apprehensions were vain, yet he was forced to allow them in a Manner innate:" From which Concession, a Divine, me-thinks, might raise a good Argument against him, for the Truth as well as Usefulness of Religion." Now as some may possibly be at a Loss to determine here,
whether the noble Writer be in \textit{Jest} or \textit{Earnest}, the Argument he hints at is plainly this: That if we look round the Works of Nature, we shall find an Analogy established, which seems a Proof, that this natural Fear, which \textit{possesseth} so universally on the human Mind, hath a real and proportioned Object. The Argument hath been urged by many of great Name, in Favour of the \textit{Hope} of future \textit{Good}; and 'tis surely of equal Force, whatever the Force may be, when apply'd to the \textit{Fear} of future \textit{Ill}. For we see thro' the whole Creation, every Animal, of whatever Species, directed by its Nature, or the Hand of Providence, to fear and shun its proper and appointed Enemy. We find these Apprehensions universally suited to the Nature and Preservation of every Species among Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Insects. Nor is there one \textit{Fear}, tho' sometimes \textit{excessive} in its \textit{Degree}, that is \textit{erroneous} with regard to its \textit{Object}. The \textit{religious Fear}, therefore, which \textit{forceth itself} so universally on the human Mind, in every Age and Nation, ignorant or knowing, civilized or barbarous; hath \textit{probably} an Object suited to its \textit{Nature}, ordained for the Welfare of the human Species. At least, this Argument
ment must ever be of Weight with those, who draw their Ideas of future Existence from the Instincts, Hopes, and Expectations of the human Mind.

Indeed, on the noble Writer's refined Scheme of Morals, in which the natural Affections of the Mind are represented, as all-sufficient for the Purposes of human Happiness, this Argument must lose its Force; because, on this Supposition, the religious Fear is supernumerary and useless: But then this shews the Supposition itself to be monstrous, absurd, and contrary to the established Course of Nature; because Nature gives no Power or Passion, but to some proper and appointed End: The very Existence of the Passion, therefore, is a Proof of its Necessity.

Now, if indeed the religious Fear be necessary, as, we presume, hath been sufficiently proved in the preceding Essay; then, from hence will arise a strong and convincing Proof, that the Object of religious Fear is real. For we find thro' the whole Extent of created Being, that the Author of Nature hath annexed to all his Designs and Purposes, the proper Means or Objects, by which they may be fulfilled.
As therefore the religious Fear is not only interwoven with the Frame of Man, but absolutely necessary to his Happiness, its Object must be real; because, if not, you suppose the Creator to have given a necessary Passion, without its proper and appointed Object; which would be a Contradiction to the universal and known Constitution of Things.

On this Occasion, we may observe the Weakness of the Epicurean System, concerning Providence: For that Sect hath ever deny'd, that the Deity concerns himself with the moral Conduct of Man. But from the wise and benevolent Constitution of the natural World itself, a strong Proof ariseth in Support of God's moral Government of it, and of the Truth of the Fears and Expectations of the human Mind. For if we allow that he regards and preserves the natural Order and Symmetry of the Creation; that he hath formed this immense System of Being, and secur'd its Continuance and Welfare, by certain Laws, necessary to the Happiness of his Creatures; then we must on the same Foundation conclude, that he hath likewise established such Motives and Laws of Action, as may determine Man.
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Ess. III. Man to prosecute the same End. It were an Imputation on the Wisdom of the Deity, to conceive him as doing the one, and omitting the other: Unless Mind and Morals be less worthy of his Regard, than Matter and Motion.

But still the noble Writer proceeds in the Spirit of Derision, to expose the Absurdities and Mischiefs this misguided religious Principle hath occasioned; he often expatiates on the Superstitious Horrors, and furious Zeal which have had their Source in this Principle; and thence, in the Way of Insinuation, concludes it irrational and groundless.

The Facts, it must be owned, are notorious and undeniable: But the Consequence is no less evidently chimerical and vain. Lord Shaftesbury himself hath observed, that in Failure of a just Prince or Magistrate, Mankind are ready to submit themselves even to a Tyrant: "Like new-born Creatures, who have never seen their Dam, they will fancy one for themselves, and apply (as by Nature prompted) to some like Form for Favour and Protection. In the Room of a true Foster-Father and Chief, they will take after
Christianity. 253

"after a false one; and in the Room of a Sect. legal Government and just Prince, obey even a Tyrant." And hence he draws a strong Proof of the Force of the social or herding Principle, even from despotic Power itself. Again he hath remarked, that He- roism and Philanthropy are almost one and the same; yet by a small Misguidance of the Affection, a Lover of Mankind becomes a Ravager; a Hero and Deliverer becomes an Oppressor and Destroyer. "Tis the same in Religion. Where the human Mind (ever restless in its Search for the great Centre of created Being, on which alone it can perfectly repose itself) seeks, but cannot find the true God, it naturally sets up a false one in his Place: Here too, Mankind, "like new-born Creatures, who have never seen their Dam, will fancy one for themselves, and apply (as by Nature prompted) to some like Form for Favour and Protection. In the Room of a true Foster-Father, they will take after a false one; and in the Room of an all-perfect God, worship even an Idol." The religious Principle, thus misguided, breaks forth indeed, into Enor-

\[\text{Wit and Hum. P. iii. § 1.} \quad \text{Ib. § 2.}\]
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mities the most pernicious and destructive: Hence indeed, "by a small Misguidance of the Affection, a Lover of Mankind becomes a Ravager; a Saint, an Oppressor and Destroyer." But as from the Abuse of the social Principle, so here, in that of the religious one, no other Consequence can be justly drawn, but that it is natural and strong.

But further, the noble Writer finds the Notion of future Punishment, inconsistent with his Idea of divine Goodness. Therefore, says he, "We can have no dread or Sus-

pect to make us uneasy: For it is Malice only, and not Goodness, which can make us afraid 1."

Yet, on another Occasion, his Lordship can affirm, and justly, that, "a Man of Temper may resist or punish without Anger." And if so, why may not divine Goodness make us afraid? For as divine Goodness regards the greatest Happiness of all its Creatures; so, if Punishment be necessary to that End, divine Goodness will therefore ordain Punishment. To this Purpose, a Writer of distinguished Rank and Penetration: "In Reality, Goodness is the natu-

1 Eng. B. ii. Part ii. § 2.
"Malice may be appeased or satiated: Humour may change: But Goodness is as a fixed, steady immoveable Principle of Action. If either of the former holds the Sword of Justice, there is plainly Ground for the greatest of Crimes to hope for Impunity. But if it be Goodness, there can be no possible Hope, whilst the Reasons of Things, or the Ends of Government call for Punishment. Thus every one sees how much greater Chance of Impunity an ill Man has in a partial Administration, than in a just and upright one. It is said, that the Interest or Good of the whole, must be the Interest of the universal Being; and that he can have no other. Be it so. This Author (Ld. S.) has proved that Vice is naturally the Misery of Mankind in this World: Consequently it was for the Good of the whole, that it should be so. What Shadow of Reason then is there to assert; that this may not be the Case hereafter? Danger of future Punishment (and if there be Danger, there is Ground of Fear) no more supposes Malice, than the present Feeling of Punishment does."

"Dr. Butler's Sermons, Preface, p. 21."
Thus the noble Writer's Derision and Argumentation are equally chimerical and impious; as it appears, that the natural Fears and Expectations of the human Mind are at least founded in Probability.

SECTION III.

HIS Lordship's Opinions being so little favourable to natural Religion, we cannot wonder, if we find him, on every possible Occasion, throwing out Insinuations and virulent Remarks, in order to disgrace revealed. The first that will deserve our Notice, are such as tend to invalidate the Credibility of Scripture History.

He tells us, "He who says he believes for certain, or is assured of what he believes, either speaks ridiculously, or says in effect, he believes strongly, but is not sure: So that whoever is not conscious of Revelation, nor has certain Knowledge of any Miracle or Sign, can be no more than sceptick in the Case: And the best Christian in the World, who being destitute of the Means of Certainty, depends only on History and Tradition for his Belief of these particulars, is at best but a sceptick Christian."
Now it should seem, that the Dexterity of this Passage lies in a new Application of two or three Words. For, by "certain and assured" he means more, by "Scepticism" he means much less, than it is ever used to signify. And thus as in Dr. Mandeville's Philosophy, (already criticized) wherever we have not Demonstration, 'tis plain we must needs be Sceptics.

But if indeed we must be Sceptics in Revealed Religion on this Account; the same Consequence will follow, with Regard to every other Kind of Knowledge that depends on human Testimony. We must be Sceptics too, in our Belief of every past Transaction; nay of every thing transacted in our own Times, except only of what falls within the narrow Circle of our proper Observation. The Manners of Men, the Site of Countries, the Varieties of Nature, the Truths of Philosophy, the very Food we eat, and Liquids we drink, are all received on the sole Evidence of human Testimony. But what Name would he merit among Men, who in these Instances should say, "he does not believe for certain, or is not assured of what he believes," till in every Case he

* See above, Essay ii.
should be impelled by the Force of Demonstration, or the Evidence of Sense?

And indeed, on other occasions, where Christianity is not concerned, the noble Writer can speak in a very different, and much jufter Manner. For thus he appeals to Nature, in Proof of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator. "Thus, too, in the System of the bigger World. See there the mutual Dependency of Things: The Relation of one to another; of the Sun to this inhabited Earth; and of the Earth and other Planets to the Sun! The Order, Union, and Coherence of the whole! And know, my ingenious Friend, that by this Survey you will be obliged to own the universal System, and coherent Scheme of Things; to be established on abundant Proof, capable of convincing any fair and just Contemplator of the Works of Nature." His Lordship's Argument is surely just. Yet, is there one to be found among five hundred of those, who are thus convinced of the wise Structure of the Universe, who have ever taken a Survey of this immense System, except only in the Books and Diagrams of experienced Philosophers?

Moralist, P. ii. § 4.

How
How few are capable even of comprehending the *Demonstrations*, on which the Truth of the *Copernican System* is established; or receiving on any other Proof than that of *human Testimony*, "the Relation of the Earth and other Planets to the Sun, the Order, Union, and Coherence of the whole?" It cannot be supposed, that even the noble Writer himself ever went thro' the tedious Process of *Experiment* and *Calculation*, which alone can give absolute Certainty in this extensive Subject. Yet we find, he is not in any Degree, "sceptical in the Case;" but very rationally determines, that the Wisdom of the Deity, in "this universal System, is established on abundant Proof, capable of convincing any fair and just Contemplator of the Works of Nature."

It appears then, that a Confidence in the Veracity of others is not peculiar to the Belief of *Revealed Religion*: The same takes Place in almost every Subject. More particularly, we see, that in the *History of Nature*, as in that of *Revelation*, the Evidence of human Testimony is the only Sort of Proof that can be given to Mankind: And whoever allows this Proof, as being "abundant and convincing" in the one, and dis...
E S S A Y allows or despiseth it in the other, how self-satisfied soever he may be in his own Imagination, is neither a fair nor a just Contemplator of the Works and the Ways of Providence.

If therefore any Objection lies against the Credibility of the Scripture History, it must consist in maintaining, not "that human Testimony is insufficient to support it," but "that, in Fact, it is not sufficiently supported by the Evidence of human Testimony." If so; this Defect must arise, either from a Want of External Evidence: Or, Secondly, because the Facts, Doctrines, and Composition of the Bible, are such, that no Testimony whatever can convince us that it is a divine Revelation.

With Regard to the first of these, "the Testimony on which the Authenticity of the Gospel History is founded:" This the noble Writer hath attacked by a long Chain of Insinuations, in his last Miscellany. Where, in the Way of Dialogue, he hath indeed amply repaid the Treatment, which in the preceding Chapter he charges upon the Clergy. For here he hath introduced two of that Order, who, to use his own Ex-
and Christianity.

... are indeed his very legitimate and obsequious Puppets, who co-operate in the most officious Manner with the Author, towards the Display of his own proper Wit, and the Establishment of his private Opinion and Maxims." "Where after the poor Phantom or Shadow of an Adversary, has said as little for his Cause as can be imagined, and given as many Opens and Advantages as could be desired, he lies down for good and all; and passively submits to the killing Strokes of his unmerciful Conqueror."

To these Gentlemen the noble Writer assigns the Herculean Labour, of proving the Necessity of an absolute Uniformity in Opinion. A hopeful Project indeed! as his Lordship calls it elsewhere. No Wonder he comes off Conqueror in such a Debate. But here lies the Peculiarity of his Conduct: That while he pretends only to prove, that the Scripture cannot be a Foundation for Uniformity of Opinion in all Things; he hath thrown out such Insinuations, as evidently imply, that there can be no Foundation for believing the Truth of any thing the Gospel History contains. He says, he...
began by desiring them "to explain the Word Scripture, and by enquiring into the Original of this Collection of anti-enter and later Tracts, which in general they comprehend under that Title: whether it were the apocryphal Scripture, or the more canonical? the full or half-authorized? the doubtful or the certain? the controverted or uncontroverted? the singly read, or that of various Reading? The Texts of these Manuscripts or of those? the Transcripts, Copies, Titles, Catalogues of this Church and Nation, or of that other? of this Sect and Party, or of another? of those in one Age called Orthodox, and in Possession of Power, or of those, who, in another, overthrew their Predecessor's Authority; and, in their Turn also, assumed the Guardianship and Power of holy Things? For how these sacred Records were guarded in those Ages, might easily (he said) be imagined by any one who had the least Insight into the History of those Times, which we called Primitive, and those Characters of Men, whom we styled Fathers of the Church."
Here, as his Lordship drags us into the beaten Tract of Controversy, the best Compliment that can be paid the Reader, is to carry him thro' it by the shortest Way. The stale Objections here raked together by the noble Author have been so often, and so fully refuted, by a Variety of excellent Writers, that, to many, it may seem a needless Task, even to touch upon the Subject.

However, for the Satisfaction of those who may think it necessary, a summary View of the Evidence is here subjoined.

The Authenticity, therefore, of the Books of the new Testament, appears to be founded on the strongest moral Evidence, because, from the earliest Ages, we find them ascribed to the Apostles and Evangelists, whose Names they bear. Thus St. Paul's Epistles are mentioned by St. Peter, and cited by Clemens Romanus, who lived in the Reign of Claudius, even before St. Paul was carried Prisoner to Rome. Polycarp and Irenæus were for some Time contemporary with St. John: They both cite

Du Pin, Le Clerc, Tillemont, Whitby, Lardner, Phil. Lipsiæni, &c. and very lately Mr. Jortin, in his learned Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.
the four Gospels, and affirm they were all written by the Apostles and Evangelists, whose Names they bear. Justus Martyr and Clemens Alexandrinus confirm their Accounts in the following Century: And the great Origen, with whom I shall close the Catalogue, and who lived in the Reign of Severus, in his Book against Celsus, hath cited all the Gospels, and most, if not all the Epistles, under the Names they now bear; And the Words of the several Citations perfectly agree with those of the New Testament, now in use. Such a full Proof of the Genuineness of these sacred Records, as is not to be parallel'd, concerning any other Book, of equal or even of much less Antiquity.

The internal Proof of their Genuineness, arising from their Style and Composition, is no less eminent and particular. The Genius of every Book is so perfectly agreeable to the Character and Education of its respective Author; every Custom described or alluded to, either Jewish, Greek, or Roman, so entirely suited to the Times; every Incident so natural, so occasional, so particular, so perfectly identify'd, that it were the very Extreme
Extreme of Ignorance and Folly, to raise a Sect.

**THAT the Gospel-History hath been transmitted to us, pure and uncorrupted, we have no less Reason to believe. 'Tis well known how zealous the primitive Christians were in the Preservation of the Scriptures: We know, they regarded them as their chief and dearest Treasure; and often laid down their Lives, rather than deliver the sacred Records to their Enemies, who used every Art of Terror, to seize and destroy them. Again, the Scriptures were not then locked up from the Laity, as now in the Roman Church: But Copies were taken, dispersed, and became immensely numerous. They were universally read at the Times of public Worship, in different Nations of the World. To this we may add, that as now, so then, different Sects and Parties subsisted, who all appealed to Scripture for Proof of their several Opinions; and these, 'tis evident, must have been so many Checks upon each other, to the general Exclusion of Mistake and Fraud.

* The Jews and Samaritans were Checks upon each others in the same Manner, for the Preservation of the Purity of the Pentateuch. The Samaritan Pentateuch.
This being the real State of the Case; let us now consider the noble Writer's Questions. He asks, whether by Scripture be understood "the apocryphal or more canonical?" "the full or half authorized? the doubtful "or the certain? the controverted or un-"controverted?" These Questions are nearly synonymous, and one short Reply will clear them all. There are many Books, concerning which there never was any Doubt. There are some, concerning which the Doubts have been fully cleared up. There are others, concerning which the Doubts have been confirmed. Of the first Kind are all the Gospels, and most of the Epistles: Of the second, are the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second of Peter, second and third of John, that of Jude, and the Apocalypse: Of the third Kind, are the apocryphal Books; therefore indeed so called.

The noble Author goes on. "The "single read, or that of various Reading?"

*teuch was printed in the last Century: And, "after "Two thousand Years Discord between the two Na-"tions, varies as little from the other, as any Classic "Author in less Tract of Time has disagreed from it-"self by the unavoidable Mistakes of so many Tran-"scribers." See Phil. Lipsiens. My
My Lord, if by *single read*, you mean a Book in which there are no various Readings, there are none *single read*: Nor, probably, was there ever any Book *single read*, that went thro' more than one Edition: at least, before the Invention of *Printing*. And as the Scriptures were oftner transcribed than any other Book, so, a greater Variety of Readings must naturally take place. But I must inform your Lordship, from the learned *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, that this is the most illiterate of all Cavils: For that in Fact, we have the *Sense* of those ancient Authors most entire, where the various readings are most numerous: As, of those Authors where the Varieties are fewest, the Sense is most mutilated or obscure. But if by *single read*, your Lordship means an authentic Text collected and composed out of the various Readings, I beg leave to inform you, there is no such in the Protestant Churches. They have been too modest to attempt any such thing. Nor does the *Truth* suffer by it: For as the learned Critic, just before quoted, observes, the most faulty Copy of the new Testament now in

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For a full View of this Argument, See *Phil. Lipsiens*.
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Essay being, does not obscure one moral Doctrine, or one Article of Faith.

Again the noble Writer goes on, in a Profusion of synonymous Terms: "The Transcripts, Copies, Titles, Catalogues, of this Church or that? of this Sect or Party, or another? of those in one Age called orthodox, or those who in another Age overthrew them?" What unexperienced Person would not imagine from hence, that different Churches, Sects, or Parties, had each of them a Bible different from the rest? Yet 'tis certain, that however these Parties differed in Opinions, we find from their Writings now subsisting, that they all appealed to one common Scripture for their Support.

The noble Writer takes his Leave by paying a Compliment to these primitive Writers, called the Fathers of the Church. "How these sacred Records were guarded in those Ages, might be easily imagined," &c. --- But to imagine, is a much easier Talk than to prove; especially when Imagination is helped forward by Inclination. Guarded indeed they were, as we have seen, from Interpolation and Falsehood. But if he means to insinuate, that they were guard-
ed from Inspection and Criticism, he does great Injustice to Christianity. For whatever Marks of secular Views may be discovered in the Conduct of the ancient Christians in the succeeding Ages, we may safely bid Defiance to the noble Writer's Admirers, to shew any thing of this Kind in the Characters of those to whose Testimony we have here appealed; and on whose Testimony, joined to that of their numerous and ingenuous Contemporaries, the Authenticity of the Gospel-History depends. They were far from acting or writing with a View to temporal Advantage; they were struggling under the Weight of heavy Persecutions; had no Motives to preach or write, but the great Expectation of Happiness hereafter, founded on a firm Belief of that holy Religion, which they propagated with an Effect almost, if not indeed, miraculous.

On this Occasion I cannot but observe a strange Insinuation thrown out elsewhere by the noble Writer; which, however, is so glaring a falsehood, that he finds himself obliged to disavow it, even while he labours to impress it on his Reader's Imagination, in all the Colours of Eloquence. "If, " says
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says he, the collateral Testimony of other ancient Records were destroyed, there would be less Argument or Plea remaining against that natural Suspicion of those who are called Sceptical, that the holy Records themselves were no other than the pure Invention or artificial Compile-ment of an interested Party, in Behalf of the richest Corporation, and most profitable Monopoly in the World. Now if his Lordship be indeed in earnest in urging this Insinuation, he must believe, that one Set of Men preached, and wrote, and endured Bonds and Imprisonment, Torments and Death; to the End that another Set of Men, some three or four hundred Years after, might enjoy the rich Corporations and profitable Monopoly of Church Preferments. How far this may be a Proof of the noble Writer's Sagacity, I shall leave others to determine. But if he believes not the Insinuation, as indeed he seems to disbelieve it, then we cannot surely hesitate a Moment concerning the Measure of his Sincerity.

The Gentleman therefore who makes so ridiculous a Figure in the supposed Con-

*Misc. v. c. i.*

-ternation

-versation
and Christianity.

Puppet, might have returned one general and satisfactory answer to all these extraordinary questions. He might have desired his Lordship "to choose which he should like best or worst among all these controverted copies, various readings, manuscripts, and catalogues adopted by whatever church, sect, or party." Nay, he might have desired him to choose any of the almost infinite number of translations made of these books in distant countries and ages: and taking that to be the scripture he appealed to, might safely have relied on it, as amply sufficient for all the great purposes of religion and Christianity.

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Since therefore the scripture history appears to be supported by higher degrees of human testimony, than any other ancient writing; the only objection of real weight against it, must be drawn from its internal structure; from the facts it relates, the doctrines it inculcates, or the form of its composition.

The facts related, being as it were the foundation of all, will naturally come first under
Now these, say the Enemies of Christianity, are miraculous or out of Nature, and therefore absurd: For as they can prove nothing, so it is impossible that Accounts of this Kind could be so essentially mingled with a Religion that should come from God.

On this Foundation the noble Writer hath taken frequent Occasion to deride what he calls the "Mockery of Miracles;" particularly those of our Saviour. Here we shall find him striking at the very Basis of all revealed Religion, while he affirms, that, even supposing the Truth of the Facts, Miracles cannot witness either for God or Men, nor are any Proof either of Divinity or Revelation. But that his Argument may be fairly represented, let it appear in his own Words: "The Contemplation of the Universe, its Laws and Government, was (I aver'd) the only Means which could establish the sound Belief of a Deity. For what tho' innumerable Miracles from every Part assailed the Sense, and gave the trembling Soul no Respite? What tho' the Sky should suddenly open, and all kinds of

* Misc. ii. c. 2.  
* Ib. c. 3.  
* Moralist, Part ii. § 5. passim.
"Prodigies appear, Voices be heard, or Characters read? What would this evince more, than that there were certain Powers could do all this? But what Powers; whether one or more; whether superior or subaltern; mortal or immortal; wise or foolish; just or unjust; good or bad: This would still remain a Mystery; as would the true Intention, the Infallibility or Certainty of whatever these Powers asserted."

'Tis remarkable, that the noble Writer pretends here only to shew, that Miracles are no Proof of the Existence of God: Yet in the Conclusion of his Argument, he brings it home to the Case of Revelation: To the true Intention, the Infallibility or Certainty of whatever these Powers asserted. This is clearly the Scope of his Argument: And so indeed hath it been understood by his Under-workmen in Infidelity, who have with great Industry retailed this Objection. As it is a Circumstance of the last Importance in regard to the Truth of Christianity, it cannot be an unseasonable Task, to shew in the fullest Manner the Vanity and Error of this trite Cavil.

But, instead of considering single Acts of supernatural or miraculous Power, as be-
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Es sa yjng performed in Attestation of any particular Doctrine, (which hath been the general Way of treating this Question) 'tis my Design to consider as one Object, "that vast Series " and Concatenation of miraculous Acts, " recorded in the Old and New Testament, " wrought thro' a long Succession of Ages, " for the Carrying on, Support, and Com- " pletion of the Christian Dispensation."

With this View therefore let us first consider the Means by which Mankind are justly convinced of the Being of a God. Now this Conviction, 'tis allowed by all, ariseth from an Union of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, displayed in the visible Creation. From this Union alone arises the Idea of an all-" perfect Being: So that a Failure in any of these three essential Circumstances, would destroy the Idea of a God. The Goodness of the Deity is seen in the designed End or Purpose of the Creation, which is, "The "Happiness of all his Creatures:" His Wis- dom is seen, in the proper Means employed for the Accomplishment of this great End: His Power fulfills what Goodness had intended and Wisdom contrived, by putting these Means in Execution. Hence then alone we obtain the Idea of a Divinity, from a Union of perfect Goodness, Wisdom, and Power.
'Tis likewise, I think, acknowledged by all Theists, that, as to the divine Power, it may work its Intentions, either by a continued and uninterrupted Superintendency, or Agency on Matter, or by impressing certain original and permanent Qualities upon it. Which of these two Kinds of Operation may really prevail in Nature, is perhaps beyond the Reach of human Knowledge, clearly to determine. The Newtonian Philosophy indeed renders it highly probable, that the continued Agency of God prevails. But a Determination in this Subject is indeed of no Consequence; since, which soever of these Methods be ordained, the divine Power is equally display'd, while it ministers to the Ends of Goodness and Wisdom.

'Tis equally plain, that, if the divine Goodness should determine to raise Mankind to higher Degrees of Knowledge and Virtue, than what they could attain to by the pre-established Laws of Nature; or to free them from Defects and Miseries, occasioned by any incidental and voluntary Corruptions, posterior to their Creation; 'tis equally plain, I say, that an Exertion of supernatural Power for the Accomplishment
Of this End, would be a Display, Proof, or Revelation of the Divinity, entirely similar to that which arises from the Works of Nature. For both here, and in the Works of Nature, the Proof of the Divinity ariseth, not from mere uniform Acts of Power, but from the Subserviency of divine Power to this one great End, the Production of human Happiness. Here then, the noble Writer's Objection is essentially defective: What he affirms is either false, or foreign to the Question. For if we suppose (and the present Question is put upon this Footing only) that the miraculous or supernatural Effects are evidently subservient to similar Ends of Wisdom and Goodness, as appear in the Works of the Creation; then sure, we have equal Reason to conclude, and be convinced, that they are the Effects of one Power; — of one superior and immortal Power; — of one Power, wise, just, and good; — In a word, of that Power, which first brought Nature into Being, established Laws for the Welfare of his Creatures; and when the Happiness of his Creatures requires an Interposition, gives still further Evidences of his Goodness, Wisdom, and Omnipotence.
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Nipotence, by controuling those Laws which himself had established.

Let us now apply these Principles to the Christian Dispensation. "This, we say, was a Scheme of Providence, which still continues operating; whereby the Deity determined to raise fallen and corrupted Man to higher Degrees of Knowledge, Virtue, and Happiness, than what by Nature he could have attained." In this Design, the divine Goodness is eminently displayed.

The Means, whereby this great Design was accomplished, was, "by separating a peculiar People from the rest of Mankind; not for their own Sakes, but for the Sake of all; by preserving them amidst their Enemies; by leading them forth into a distant Country; by establishing there the Worship of the one God, in Opposition to the Idolatries of surrounding Nations: Till, when the Fulness of Time should come, and Mankind be capable of receiving a more perfect Revelation, a Saviour Jesus Christ should be sent, to free Mankind from the Power of Ignorance and Sin; to bring Life and Immortality to Light, and communicate to all..."
ESSAY all Men the most perfect practical Knowledge of the true God, and of every moral Duty." In this Dispensation is no less eminently displayed the divine Wisdom.

But what less than Omnipotence itself could secure the perfect Execution of a Plan so mighty and extensive? Which reaching thro' the Compass of many, and distant Ages, must combat the Power, control the Prejudices, and work its Way thro' the discordant Manners and Opinions of all the Kingdoms of the Earth. On this Account the immediate Exertion of divine Power was necessary for its Proof, Support, and Completion. Accordingly, we find its omnipotent Author, carrying on the Scheme of Wisdom and Goodness, with a mighty Hand, and an out-stretched Arm. "He sent a Man before his People, even Joseph, who was sold to be a Bond-Servant: He increased his People exceedingly, and made them stronger than their Enemies. He sent Moses his Servant, and Aaron: And these shewed his Tokens among them; and Wonders in the Land of Ham. He sent Darkness, and it was dark; and turned their Waters into Blood. Their Land brought forth Frogs, yea, even in their King's
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"King's Chambers. He gave them Hailstones for Rain, and Flames of Fire in their Land. He spake the Word, and the Locusts came innumerable, and devoured the Fruit of their Ground. He smote all the First-born in their Land, even the chief of all their Strength. He brought forth his People from among them: He spread out a Cloud to be a Covering, and Fire to give them Light in the Night-Season. He rebuked the Red-Sea also, and it was dried up; so he led them thro' the Deep as thro' a Wilderness. At their Desire he brought Quails, and filled them with the Bread of Heaven. He opened the Rock of Stone, so that Rivers ran in dry Places. Yet within a while they forgot his Works, and tempted God in the Desert: Then the Earth opened, and swallowed up Datban, and covered the Congregation of Abiram. They joined themselves unto Baal-Peor, and provoked him with their own Inventions; so the Plague was great amongst them: Then, being chastised, they turned to their God. He led them over Jordan; the Waters divided to let them pass. He discomfited their Enemies: At his Word,
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Word the Sun abode in the Midst of Heaven; and the Moon stood still, and hasted not to go down for a whole Day. So he gave the Kingdoms of Canaan to be an Heritage unto his People; that all the Nations of the World might know that the Hand of the Lord is mighty, and that they might fear the Lord continually.

Here then we see, that this mighty Series of miraculous Acts recorded in the Old Testament, being the very Means of preserving and separating the Israelites from the rest of Mankind, and at the same time designed to impress them with a lasting Idea of the uncontrollable and immediate Power of God; were generally awakening Instances of Omnipotence, often of Justice and Terror, in the Punishment of cruel Egyptians, rebellious Jews, and idolatrous Nations.

In pursuing this vast Concatenation of divine Power thro' the Series of Miracles recorded in the New Testament, and wrought for the same End, the Completion of Christianity, we shall find them of a very different Nature and Complexion: Yet still, admirably suited to accomplish the same designed Ends of Providence. For now the Fulness of
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of Time was come, in which the Wisdom of the Deity ordained the immediate Establishment of a Religion of perfect Purity and boundless Love. Accordingly, the Series of miraculous Acts wrought for this great End, were such as must naturally engage Mankind to a favourable Reception of Christianity; were the very Image and Transcript, expressive of the very Genius of that most amiable Religion they were brought to support and establish; in a word, were continued Instances of Omnipotence, joined with unbounded Charity, divine Compassion, and Benevolence.

The Birth of Jesus was proclaimed by a glorious Apparition of superior Beings, who declared the End of his coming in that divine Song of Triumph, "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men!" His Life was one continued Scene of divine Power, Wisdom, and Beneficence. He gave Eyes to the Blind; Ears to the Deaf; and Feet to the Lame: He raised the Dead to Life, rebuked the raging Elements, and made the Winds and Seas obey him. When, to fulfill the Decrees of Heaven, and complete the great Work of Man's Redemption, he submitted to an ignominious Death, the Veil
Veil of the Temple was rent in twain: A general Darkness involved, and an Earthquake shook, the City. The same Omnipotence by which he wrought his Miracles, raised him from the Grave; and after a short Stay on Earth, during which he strengthened and confirmed his desponding Followers, translated him to Heaven. And now, a new and unexpected Scene of divine and miraculous Power opened on Mankind, for the full Establishment of Christianity. The Spirit of God came down, and dwelt with the Apostles; they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance. They were invested with supernatural Power to heal diseases; were empowered to strike dead the deceitful Ananias and Sapphira; and when imprisoned were delivered by the immediate Hand of God. By these Means, Christianty gained a numerous Train of Proselytes among the Jews; but the great Work of converting the Gentiles was not yet begun. To this End the Apostle Paul was destined; and converted to Christianty by an amazing Act of supernatural and divine Power. In this important Ministry he was frequently preserved by
by the miraculous Care of Providence; did he himself perform stupendous Acts of Power and Beneficence; by these Means converting Multitudes among the Gentiles, and planting Christianity in the most knowing and polished Nations of the Earth.

To this irresistible Chain of Evidence, arising from the miraculous Exertion of divine Power, we may add another collateral Proof, arising from the miraculous Emanations of divine Fore-knowledge, recorded in the Bible, and delivered in Prophecy thro' a Series of Ages, all centering in the same Point, the foretelling the Completion of this immense Plan of Wisdom and Goodness. These Predictions were fulfilled in the Advent, Life, Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour; who himself foretold the Success of his Apostles among the Gentiles, and the final Dissolution of the Jewish Polity. This came to pass in the Destruction of the Temple: And when a bitter Enemy to Christianity attempted to make void the Decrees of Heaven in rebuilding this Temple, (the only Circumstance of Union that could ever make the Jews once more a People) the very Foundations were rent in Pieces by an Earthquake,
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Earthquake, and the mad Assailants against Omnipotence buried in the Ruins.

From this mighty Union, therefore ariseth a Proof similar to that which we obtain from the Works of Nature. For as in these we see the Happiness of the Creation intended, plannd, and produced, and from hence discover the Agency of the Deity; so in the Progress and Completion of Christianity we find a parallel Display of the divine Attributes: We see the Advancement of Man's Happiness determined by divine Goodness, plannd by divine Wisdom, foretold by divine Knowledge, accomplished by divine Power: And hence, as in Nature, obtain a full Manifestation, Proof, or Revelation of the Deity.

As this seems to be the true Light, in which the Evidence arising from the Scripture-Miracles ought to be placed, it may be proper now to add a few Observations on what hath been offered on this Subject, both by the Defenders and the Adversaries of Christianity.

I. As to the Degree of Proof or Evidence arising from a single Miracle in Support of any particular Doctrine; whatever Force it may carry, 'tis a Point, which we are
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are by no means at present concerned to determine: Because, as we have seen, in the Progress of the Christian Dispensation, there is a vast Series or Chain, all uniting in one common End. It might be considered, in the same Manner, by those who write in Proof of the Being of a God, "What Evidence of his being would arise from a single Vegetable or Animal, unconnected with the rest of the Creation." But however satisfying a single Fact of this Kind may be to impartial Minds, it were surely weak to argue on this Foundation only, while we can appeal to that mighty Union of Design which appears in the Works of Nature. It should therefore seem, that the Defenders of Christianity have generally set this Evidence in too detached and particular a Light: For tho' the Proof arising from a single Miracle, in Support of a particular Doctrine may be of sufficient Force to convince an equitable Mind; yet sure, 'tis infinitely stronger and more satisfactory, if we view at once the whole Chain of Miracles by which the great Scheme of Christianity was propagated, as one vast Object: Because in this View, we discover innumerable Circumstances of mutual Relation and Agreement,
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Agreement, similar to those which are Proofs of final Causes in the natural World: In a word, we discover that Union of Design, that Concurrence of infinite Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, which is the sure Indication of the Divinity.

II. If in a Dispensation thus proved to be from God by all these concurring Signatures of Divinity, any incidental Circumstances should be found, which are unaccountable to human Reason; 'tis the Part of human Reason to acquiesce in this mysterious and unknown Part, from what is clear and known. Because in a System or Dispensation planned by infinite Wisdom, there must of necessity be something which finite Wisdom cannot comprehend. This the noble Writer follows with regard to the Works of Nature. "If, faith he, in this mighty Union, there be such Relations of Parts one to another as are not easily discovered; if on this Account, the End and Use of Things does not everywhere appear, there is no Wonder; since 'tis indeed no more than what must happen of necessity. Nor could supreme Wisdom have otherwise ordered it. For in an Infinity of Things thus relative, a Mind which
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III. Hence therefore may be evinced the Vanity of this Cavil, "that nothing can be proved to be a divine Revelation which is not discoverable by human Reason; since whatever is reasonable needs no Miracle to confirm it, and whatever is beyond the Reach of Reason cannot be made to appear reasonable by any Miracle whatsoever." Hence, I say, the Vanity of this Cavil is evident. Because, as in Nature, so in Revelation, the full Evidence of Divinity is founded, not on single detached Circumstances, but on a mighty Union or Concatenation of Facts, implying the most perfect Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. This Foundation being once laid, if any thing incidental in either Case appears unaccountable as to its End or Use, it is naturally and properly involved, or taken in as a Part of this immense Design, which, thro' its vast Extent, must needs be incomprehensible to human Reason.

IV. As to the Objection, "that Miracles may be wrought by inferior or sub-

Moralists, P. ii. § 4. An Objection urged by Tindal, Morgan, and others.

"altern
This vanishes at once with regard to the Christian Dispensation, on the Evidence as here stated. For as the miraculous Acts of Power recorded in the Bible were wrought for the Support and Accomplishment of a Dispensation full of Goodness and Wisdom, we have the same Proof that they were the Work of the supreme God, as we have, that Nature is so. 'Tis true, that in either Case, for ought we know, inferior or subaltern Beings may have been commissioned by the Supreme as immediate Agents. But this Possibility, in either Case, can be a Matter of no Consequence to us, while it is manifest that the delegated Beings, whatever they might be, acted in full Subserviency to the Goodness, Wisdom, and Omnipotence of the one eternal God.

V. To the noble Writer's Objection, "that, while we labour to unhinge Nature, we bring Confusion on the World, and destroy that Order from whence the one infinite and perfect Principle is known;" the Reply is easy and convincing. For while the supernatural Power is directed to advance the Happiness of Mankind, 'tis so that, while we labour to unhinge Nature, we bring Confusion on the World, and destroy that Order from whence the one infinite and perfect Principle is known;" the Reply is easy and convincing. For while the supernatural Power is directed to advance the Happiness of Mankind, 'tis so
far from destroying any Principle from whence the one perfect Being is known; that, on the contrary, it gives us still clearer and more satisfying Notices of the divine Providence. 'Tis allowed on all Hands, that there are Imperfections in the Creation: And tho' there may be, and doubtless are, good Reasons unknown to us, why these should not in every Instance be removed by a particular Exertion of supernatural Power; yet when the divine Wisdom sees fit thus to interpose, for the further Advancement of his Creatures Happiness, can any thing be more irrational than to say, that "this is bringing Confusion on the World?" The only Question is, Whether "Happiness shall be destroyed for the Sake of a pre-established Law; or a pre-established Law be suspended for the Sake of Happiness?" In other Words, whether Power shall be subservient to Goodness, or Goodness yield to Power? A Question which no sound Theist can be left at a Loss to answer. As therefore the Exertion of divine Power, in Nature, is for the Production of Happiness; the miraculous Exertion of Power, for the further Advancement of Man's Happiness, is so far from "bringing
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ing Confusion on the World, either the Chaos and Atoms of the Atheists, or the Magick and Dæmons of the Polytheists, that it is even the clearest Proof, or Revelation of the Divinity.

VI. Without this apparent Subserviency to the Designs of Wisdom and Goodness, all Accounts of miraculous Facts must be highly improbable. Because we have no Reason to believe that the Deity will ever counteract the established Laws of Nature; unless for the Sake of advancing the Happiness of his Creatures.

VII. On this Account, most of the pretended Miracles recorded in the Heathen Story, are highly improbable. For it doth not appear, they were ever said to have been wrought in any Series of Chain: they never were directed to the Accomplishment of any one End, thro' different Periods of Time: Were frequently far from being beneficent: Seldom accommodated even to any rational Purpose; but generally, mere pretended Acts of arbitrary and unmeaning Power. Thus they are essentially distinguished from the Scripture Miracles; and are utterly destitute of that internal Evidence
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Evidence which ariseth from an Union of Sect.

VIII. Hence we may clearly discover the Reason, why the wiser Heathens ridiculed the Jews, even to a Proverb, for their extravagant Regard to Miracles. They knew their own to be absurd and irrational; this at once prevented them from enquiring into the real Nature of the Jewish Miracles; and at the same time, led them to deride and reject these boasted Wonders, as being no better than their own.

IX. But on the Evidence as here stated, the Scripture Miracles become even probable, from the Circumstances under which they are recorded. As they are beneficent: As they were wrought thro' different Periods of Time in Support of one Dispensation full of Wisdom and Goodness: As it is highly improbable that this Dispensation could have been completed in all its immense Variety of Circumstances without such an immediate Interposition of divine Power.

X. And now we shall plainly see the Reason why we reject the Accounts of Miracles given by Heathen Writers, while we believe the other Parts of their Story; and yet cannot reject the Jewish and Christian
Miracles, without rejecting at the same time the whole History in which they are contained. For in the first Case, as the Miracles are useless, unmeaning, and unconnected with the rest of the Facts, it appears they are merely political. But the Jewish and Christian Miracles make an essential Part of the several Events related; they are strongly connected with this great History of Providence, and are indeed the very Means by which Providence completed its gracious Purpose, "the Establishment of Christianity." We cannot therefore reject these miraculous Accounts without rejecting all the natural Events with which they are thus intimately interwoven: And this we cannot do, without destroying every received Principle of Assent, and shaking the Faith of all ancient History.

I cannot conclude this Argument without transcribing a noble Passage from the Book of Wisdom, where several of these Truths are finely illustrated: And which may convince us, how just an Idea the Jews entertained of miraculous Interposition, beyond what their Enemies have industriously represented. The Writer, after recounting the stupendous Chain of Miracles wrought
wrought for the Deliverance of the chosen People, concludes thus. "In all things,
"O Lord, thou hast magnified and glorified thy People, and hast not despised to
assist them in every Time and Place,--
"for every Creature in its Kind was fashioned anew, and served in their own
"Offices enjoined them, that thy Children
"might be kept without Hurt.--For the
"things of the Earth were changed into
"things of the Water, and the thing that
did swim went upon the Ground. The
"Fire had Power in the Water, contrary
to his own Virtue; and the Water forgat
his own Kind to quench.-- Thus the
"Elements were changed among themselves
"by a Kind of Harmony, as when one Tune
"is changed upon an Instrument of Music,
"and the Melody still remaineth."

Thus he nobly expresseth the Subserviency of the Elements to the divine Will: and under the Image of a musical Instrument, which the skilful Master tunes, changes, and directs to the one Purpose of Harmony, he aptly and beautifully represents the whole Creation as an Instrument in the Hands of God, which he orders, varies, and con-
SECTION V.

Having vindicated the Scripture Miracles from the noble Writer's Objections; and shewn that they are so far from being useless or absurd, that the grand Scheme of Providence could neither have been evidenced nor accomplished without them; we have destroyed the chief Foundation on which his Lordship hath attempted to fix his Cavils against Christianity on another Subject; I mean that of Enthusiasm; which naturally offers itself next to our Consideration. As this is the noble Writer's favourite Topic, we may reasonably expect to see him shine in it: And in one Respect indeed he does. He never touches on the Subject, but he riseth above himself: His Imagination kindles; he catches the Fire he describes; and his Page glows with all the Ardors of this high Passion.

It will, I presume, be unnecessary to make any Remarks on the large and eminent List of Enthusiasts, Poets, Orators, Heroes, Legislators, Musicians, and Philosophers,
and Christianity.

Sophers, which his Lordship cites from Plato. He may call them Enthusiasts, if it seem good to him; and may justly rank himself in the Number too, if by that Name be understood no more, than a Man of uncommon Strength or Warmth of Imagination; for this indeed is the requisite Foundation of Excellence, in any of the Characters here enumerated.

The only Circumstance we are concerned calmly to examine, is that of religious Enthusiasm: Chiefly, to point out the essential Qualities and Characteristics which distinguish this from divine Inspiration: Hence to prove, that our Saviour and his Apostles were not religious Enthusiasts, as the noble Writer hath suggested.

'Tis indeed, as his Lordship observes, "a great Work to judge of Spirits, whether they be of God." We shall willingly join him in this Principle too, "that in order to this End, we must antecedently judge our own Spirit, whether it be of Reason or sound Sense, free of every byassing Passion, every giddy Vapour, or melancholy Fume. This is the first Knowledge, and previous Judgment; to understand, ourselves, and know what Spirit
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ESSAY III

Spirit we are of. Afterwards we may judge the Spirit in others, consider what their personal Merit is, and prove the Validity of their Testimony by the Solidity of their Brain.” On this Principle then let the Cause be determined.

In examining this Subject, therefore, we shall find, First, that in some Respects, Enthusiasm must, from its Nature always resemble divine Inspiration. Secondly, that in others it hath generally attempted a further Resemblance, but hath always betrayed itself. Thirdly, that in other Circumstances it is diametrically opposite to divine Inspiration, and void even of all seeming Resemblance.

First, Enthusiasm must, from its very Nature, in some Respects always resemble divine Inspiration. They both have the Deity for their Object; and consequently must both be attended with a devout Turn of Mind. They must both be subject to strong and unusual Impressions; the one supernatural; the other praeternatural, that is, beyond the ordinary Efforts of Nature, tho’ really produced by Nature: These, thro’ their uncommon Force, will often resemble, and not easily be distinguished from those which
which are the real Effect of supernatural Power. This Circumstance deserves a particular Attention: For these two Qualities which are common to both, have induced many to reject the very Notion of divine Inspiration, as mere Enthusiasm. Whereas we see, that, supposing such a thing as divine Inspiration, it cannot but resemble Enthusiasm in these two Characters.

But tho' it were strange, if Counterfeits did not hit off some Features of their genuine Originals; yet it were more strange, if they should be able to adopt them all, by such a perfect Imitation as to prevent their being detected.

There are, therefore, secondly, other Circumstances in which Enthusiasm hath generally attempted a further Resemblance of divine Inspiration, but in these hath always betrayed itself spurious.

The first of this Kind is, "A Pretence to, and Persuasion of the Power of working Miracles." This Persuasion must needs be natural to the Enthusiast; because he imagines himself in all things highly favoured of Heaven: The Notion of a Communication of divine Power will therefore be among the chief of his Deliriums.

In
In this the Enthusiast hath been detected, sometimes by the Absurdity of the Miracle attempted, always by his Inability to perform what he proposed. There is scarce an Absurdity so great, but what hath some Time or other been aimed at by Enthusiasts, in the Way of miraculous Power. Their Attempts have ever been void of all rational Intention, void of Beneficence, void of common Discernment: And hence manifestly the Effects of a heated Imagination. That they have always failed in their Attempts is no less known. But these are Truths so willingly allowed by the Enemies of Religion, that we need not enlarge on them. On the contrary, we have seen, the Miracles of the Gospel are rational, beneficent, united in one great End; performed before Numbers, before Enemies; recorded by Eye-Witnesses. His Lordship indeed objects or insinuates, that the Testimony even of Eye-Witnesses cannot in this Case be a Foundation for Assent, unless we know them to have been "free both from any particular Enthusiasm, and a general Turn to Melancholy." But with regard to the Miracles of the Gospel, we know that many were converted by them from their former Prejudices;
Prejudices; and therefore could not possibly be under the Influence of the Christian Enthusiasm, supposing it such. And as to their being free from Melancholy; for this we may safely appeal to the rational and consistent Accounts given by the sacred Penmen. Melancholy and Enthusiasm must ever produce inconsistent Visions. For a Proof that the Scripture Miracles are not of this Nature, we appeal to what hath been already said on this Subject in the preceding Section.

But there is one miraculous Gift, the Gift of Tongues, which hath more generally been supposed the peculiar Effect of Inspiration. We have an Account of this Kind recorded in holy Writ. And this Account the noble Writer hath thought it expedient to turn to Ridicule; by representing this supposed miraculous Gift, as the mere Effect of strong Melancholy, and natural Intemperance. To this Purpose, having observed from Dr. More, that "the Vapours and Fumes of Melancholy partake of the Nature of Wine;" he adds, "One might conjecture from hence, that the malicious Opposers of early Christianity were not un-
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Versed in this Philosophy; when they sophisticatedly objected against the apparent Force of the divine Spirit speaking in divers Languages, and attributed it to the Power of new Wine. Agreeably to this insinuated Charge, he tells us of A Gentleman who has writ late in Defence of revived Prophecy, and has since fallen himself into the prophetic Ecstacies. The noble Writer adds, I saw him lately under an Agitation (as they call it) uttering Prophecy in a pompous Latin Style, of which, out of his Ecstasy, it seems, he is wholly incapable.

Here we may see, how ready some People are to strain at a Gnat, and yet swallow a Camel. The noble Writer ridicules the Gift of Tongues from divine Inspiration, as absurd and impossible; Yet he believes, you see, or affects to believe, that this Man could speak Latin by the sole Force of Imagination and Enthusiasm. A compendious Method this, of learning Languages! I have somewhere met with a very rational Remark, that whereas it was charged by Festus upon St. Paul, that Learning had made him mad, this No-

* Misc. ii. § 2. 1 Lett. on Enth. § 6.
and Christianity.

Christianity inverts the Charge; for thus "Mad." S. C. R. "nef may make a Man learned."

But leaving his Lordship's Admirers to determine which is the greater Miracle, a Gift of Tongues from God, or a Gift of Tongues from Melancholy; 'tis our Part to throw the Essential Characters of Distinction between the Reality of one and the Pretences of the other. Now this will appear most evident, if we compare them, both in their Manner and their End. As to the Manner of this new Prophecy, the noble Writer himself tells us, it was that of Ecstasy and Convulsion; and that he saw this Gentleman under an Agitation when he had the Gift of Tongues. As to the End pretended in this miraculous Gift, it appears there was really none; For the pompous Latin Style was uttered among a People, who, in general, understood but the English Language.

But to the Manner and its End. There is not the least Hint of its having been attended with Ecstasy or Convulsion; nay, it appears from the
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the Account, that it could not have been so attended: And from the Occasion it appears how proper it was, with regard to its End. The Recital is noble and rational: Let it answer for itself. "And there were "dwellers at Jerusalem, Jews, devout "Men out of every Nation under Heaven.--- "And they were all amazed, and marvelling, "saying one to another, Behold, are not "all these which speak, Galileans? And "how hear we every Man in our own Tongue, "wherein we were born? Parthians, and "Medes, and Elamites, the Dwellers in Me-
fopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, "in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pam-
phylia, in Egypt, and in the Parts of Libya "about Cyrene: And Strangers of Rome; "Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; "we do hear them speak in our Tongues "the wonderful Words of God!" How just an Effort of divine Power! which should at once give Instruction to those who most wanted it; and be the natural Means of conveying and dispersing the glad Tidings of the Gospel to every Nation under Heaven!—

It should seem probable, therefore, that the Men who "mocked and said, These Men are "full of new Wine," were the Natives of Judea.
and Christianity. For Peter, we find, immediately arose, and addressed himself to these in particular. "Ye Men of Judea," &c. And it was natural for them to entertain this Suspicion; because they neither understood what the Apostles uttered, nor could imagine how they should obtain a Knowledge of so many various Tongues. They must, therefore, naturally suspect, that the Apostles were uttering unmeaning Sounds: And this they regarded as the Effect of Wine.

Another remarkable Circumstance, in which Enthusiasts have often pretended to resemble the divinely inspired, is, "the Gift of Prophecy." Which, indeed, is no more than another Kind of Miracle. In this too, Enthusiasm hath always betrayed itself. First, and principally, with regard to the Event. The frequent Attempts of this Kind, and their perpetual Failure, need not here be enumerated: They are known sufficiently. This cannot be charged on the Apostles with the least Appearance of Reason: For it is a Gift they hardly ever pretended to. Our Saviour indeed foretold many and great Events—the Defection of Peter; his own Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascent; the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Persecution
Persecution of his Disciples, the Propagation of his Religion among the Gentiles, the approaching Miseries and final Destruction of Jerusalem. Now all these Events were clearly accomplished: So far, therefore, are they from proving him an Enthusiast, that they demonstrate him possessed of divine Fore-knowledge.

But besides the Event, there is a notable Circumstance in the Manner, which hath ever distinguished real from pretended, true from false Prophecy: And which the noble Writer's groundless Affirmations have made it necessary to insist on.

He says, "I find by present Experience, as well as by all Histories sacred and profane, that the Operation of this Spirit is everywhere the same as to the bodily Organ." In Confirmation of this he cites a Passage from the Gentleman who was subject to the prophetic Ecstacies, which informs us, "that the ancient Prophets had the Spirit of God upon them under Ecstasy, with divers strange Gestures of Body denoting them Madmen (or Enthusiasts) as appears evidently, says he, in the Instances of Balaam, Saul, David,

"Ezekiel"
"Ezekiel, Daniel," &c. And he adds, the Gentleman "proceeds to justify this by "the Practice of the apostolic Times, and "by the Regulation which the Apostle "himself applies to these seemingly irregu- "lar Gifts." In this Instance it is not unpleasant to observe the different Views of his Lordship, and the Gentleman he refers to, in their Endeavours to establish this pretended Fact. The one was zealous to fix a Resemblance between the old and the new prophetic Manner, in order to strengthen the Credit of the revived Prophecy: The other's Intention plainly was, by that very Resemblance, which he was willing should pass for real, to destroy the Credit of the Scripture Prophecies, well knowing that the other deserved none.

But so it happens, that the noble Writer's Friend proves as bad a Historian, as he was a Prophet: And fails as miserably in relating past Events, as in foretelling future. The Truth is, that both his Lordship and the Gentleman seem to have been in a Fit of Enthusiasm, and have therefore been induced to mingle a little pious Fraud, thro' a Zeal for their respective Theories.
For in Reality, this pretended Resemblance is utterly fictitious. There is not the least Hint in Scripture, that any of the Persons mentioned as true Prophets, were ever subject to these ecstatic, convulsive Motions, which the enthusiastic Gentleman and his Tribe were always seized with. As to the Regulation made by the Apostle Paul; whoever consults the Place will find, there is no Mention made of Ecstasies, Convulsions, or extraordinary bodily Motions. And 'tis clear, that our Saviour always delivered his Prophecies on every incidental Occasion, under all the common Circumstances of human Life; calm, serene, and with unaffected Deliberation. So that the whole Charge is a bold, continued Falsehood, void of Truth, and even the Appearance of it.

Indeed, from the Instances which the noble Writer cites from Virgil and Livy, 'tis evident, that the old heathen Pretenders to Prophecy were affected in the same convulsive Manner, as the modern Christian Enthusiasts. His Lordship might have cited twenty more from ancient Writers. And what can be rationally inferred from them? What but this --- "That this convulsive Agitation..."
Agitation of the bodily Organs is a Circumstance that effectually betrays Enthusiasm; and distinguishes it from the real Inspirations recorded in holy Writ.

These are the Circumstances in which Enthusiasm will generally seem to resemble real Inspiration: Tho' on a nearer Scrutiny, these very Circumstances will always detect it. We come now to enumerate those other Qualities peculiar to Enthusiasm, in which it bears no Resemblance to divine Inspiration, and in which they are, at first View, clearly distinguished from each other. And here it is remarkable, that, as the noble Writer dwells on the former, so he scarce ever touches on these following Characters of clear Distinction. This peculiar Conduct can hardly be judged accidental: For a Man of Wit can easily improve a partial Resemblance into a complete one: But to have added other Features, of absolute Dissimilarity, would have weakened the Likeness, and consequently have disgraced the intended Representation.

The chief Qualities, which clearly and at first View distinguish Enthusiasm from divine Inspiration, I find enumerated by the

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fine
These are, "Heat of Temper, Melancholy, Credulity, Self-Conceit, and Ignorance." So far as these relate to St. Paul, the Reader is referred to the excellent Work here cited. 'Tis our Part to consider them as they may affect out Saviour, and the rest of his Apostles. And a brief Consideration may suffice: For all (except the last) are so repugnant to their Characters, that the very Mention of them refutes the Imputation.

With Regard to the first of these Qualities, "uncommon Heat of Temper," 'tis of all others most abhorrent from our Saviour's Character. He is everywhere sedate, cool, and unmoved, even under the most bitter Circumstances of Provocation: He everywhere appears a perfect Model of Benevolence, Meekness, and mild Majesty. The same Temper generally prevails among his Apostles: More particularly we may observe of the Evangelists, who are the immediate Evidences, that in their Writings they discover the most perfect Coolness. Had they been of a fiery Disposition, they had not

*See Dr. Law's Life of Christ: Where his Character is described at large.*
not failed to load the Enemies of their crucified Lord, with the bitterest Sarcasms.

With as little Reason can Melancholy be charged on the Founders of Christianity. Our Saviour came, "eating and drinking:" So entirely open, unreserved, and social, that he was branded by his Enemies, as a Friend of Publicans and Sinners. Another Circumstance, besides the Passion for Solitude hath ever distinguished Melancholy: That is, "an Over-fondness and Desire to suffer in the apprehended Cause of Truth, beyond the just and rational Ends of Suffering." Now this is diametrically opposite to the Character of our Saviour and his Apostles: For even Jesus himself was in an Agony at the Apprehension of his approaching Sufferings. So far were his Disciples from being tainted with this Melancholy, that they discovered unmanly Fear; for they all forsook him and fled. 'Tis true, they afterwards endured the severest Trials with unshaken Constancy; yet still, with the resigned Spirit of Martyrs, not the Earnestness and fanatic Vaunts of all known Enthusiasts 1.

1 For a remarkable Instance of this, see a Story relating to Savanorola. Charac. Misc. ii. c. i. in the Notes.
The Charge of Credulity hath no better Foundation. To our Saviour himself it is in its very Nature utterly inapplicable. His Disciples have been often charged with Credulity. But on impartial Examination it will appear, that the Charge is groundless. For this is an unvarying Circumstance in the Credulity of an Enthusiast, "that it never admits a Doubt." But it is evident, from the united Accounts of the Gospel-History, that they often, nay always, doubted of our Saviour's Death, tho' himself foretold it. 'Tis equally evident, they not only doubted of, but almost disbelieved, his Resurrection, till overcome by irresistible Evidence. These Circumstances afford another collateral Proof, that the Apostles were not Enthusiasts: Because it is essentially of the Nature of Enthusiasm, "to run on headlong in the open Chanel of the First conceived Opinion." Now 'tis evident, they changed their first Opinion concerning the temporal Dominion of Christ, into the firm Belief of his Death, Resurrection, and spiritual Kingdom: We cannot therefore justly charge them with that Credulity, which is the Characteristic of Enthusiasm.

See this Point treated with great Particularity of
and Christianity.

The next Circumstance, Self-Conceit, which hath ever been one of the most distinguishing Qualities of Enthusiasm, is so distant from the Character of Jesus and his Apostles, that it hath never, I believe, been laid to their Charge. The Enthusiast is perpetually boasting of immediate Converse and Communication with the Deity; and overflows with a Contempt of all, who are not of his own System. In our Saviour we discover the most unfeigned Humility and Compassion towards all Men. When urged to shew his Pretensions to a divine Mission, so far is he from resolving them into inward Feelings, Impulses, or Notices from God (the constant Practice of every Enthusiast) that, on the contrary, he calmly appeals to his Works and Doctrines; adding, in a Strain the Reverse of all Enthusiasm, that, "in what we bear Witness only to ourselves, our Witness cannot be estab-"lished as a Truth." The same Turn of Mind appears in the Apostles. They affect no Superiority themselves, nor express or

Proof, in a Pamphlet intitled, "A Discourse, proving that the Apostles were no Enthusiasts," By A. Camp-
dell, S. T. P.


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discover any Contempt or spiritual Pride with Regard to others.

The last Quality common to Enthusiasts, is that of Ignorance. This hath been sometimes charged on our Saviour himself: Often on his Apostles with an Air of Triumph. But so it is, that seeming Objections against Truth become often the strongest Evidence in Support of it. This will eminently appear in the present Case, if we consider "that Ignorance or Want of Letters, when joined with Enthusiasm, must always produce the most inconsistent Visions, whimsical Conduct, and pernicious Doctrines." These Effects, Ignorance and Enthusiasm have wrought, wherever they appeared, in every Age and Nation. Nor can it indeed be otherwise; For a lettered Enthusiast may be supposed to have an internal Balance, which must in some Degree counteract and regulate his Visions; while the unlettered is subject to no Controol, but must become the Sport and Prey to the delirious Flights of an unreined Imagination.

Now, that the Apostles and Evangelists were unlearned, must needs be granted: And tho' the noble Writer hath taken upon him to deride them on this Account; yet this
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this very Circumstance compared with their Conduct and Writings, clears them at once from the Charge of Enthusiasm. So far were they from the Ravings of this Passion, common to all ignorant Enthusiasts, that we may defy the Enemies of Christianity to produce any Instance, either of Speech or Practice, that hath the smallest Tincture of Extravagance. Their Conduct was regular and exemplary; their Words were the Words of Truth and Soberness.

As to the Charge of Ignorance against our Saviour, the Enemies of Christianity have been more cautious: Yet it hath been insinuated. And indeed, that he had not the common Aids of human Learning, is not only acknowledged, but insisted on. Could ignorant and blind Enthusiasm then have produced the sublime religious Doctrines and moral Precepts which the Evangelists have recorded from his Mouth? With as much Truth it might be affirmed, that the Creation is the Produce of Chance. With Reason then may we ask the noble Writer this Question, "Whence then had this Man such Wisdom, seeing he spake as never Man spake?" And the Answer sure is one only, "That as it was not from Man, it must have"
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... have been from God." For even the Enemies of Christianity have born Witness to its Excellence, even when they intended to disgrace it: While with fruitless Labour they have attempted to prove, "that the most exalted Truths and Precepts of the Gospel may be found scattered among the Writings of the heathen Sages."

From these concurrent Circumstances, therefore, we obtain a full internal Proof, that the Founders of Christianity were not Enthusiasts, as the noble Writer hath, by the most laboured and repeated Insinuations, attempted to represent them.

SECTION VI.

SECTION VI. SINCE therefore we have appealed to the religious and moral Doctrines of Christianity, as a concurrent Proof of its divine Original; it will be necessary now to examine what the noble Writer hath alleged or suggested against this most essential Part of our Religion.

And first, it appears from the general Turn of the Characteristics, that the noble Author regards religious Establishments as being quite at a Distance from Philosophy and...
and Christianity.

and Truth, with which, he tells us, in ancient Times they never interfered: He therefore derides every Attempt to make them coalesce. Thus he tells us, "Not only Visi-"naries and Enthusiasts of all Kinds were " tolerated by the Ancients; but, on the " other Side, Philosophy had as free a " Course, and was permitted as a Balance " against Superstition.—Thus Matters were " happily balanced; Reason had fair Play; " Learning and Science flourished. Won-"derful was the Harmony and Temper " which arose from all these Contrarieties"."

Such therefore being his Lordship's Idea of a Public Religion, which he ever opposes to private Opinion and Philosophy; 'tis no Wonder he should insinuate the Folly of Christianity, which promiseth to all its Pros-elytes, "that they shall know the Truth, "and the Truth shall make them free."

But notwithstanding the noble Writer's Partiality to the System of ancient Paganism, which he had deeply imbibed from his familiar Converse with ancient Writers; no unprejudiced Mind can hesitate a Moment, in determining the superior Excellence of the Christian Religion, compared with these.
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E S S A Y III.

well-meant, but defective Schemes of heathen Policy. For, as gross Error, and Misapprehension of the divine Nature and Attributes, was deeply interwoven with ancient Paganism; so, 'tis well known, that in Fact, the most horrid Enormities were committed upon Principle, under the Authority and Example of their pretended Gods. Lord Shaftesbury himself owns, what indeed it were Folly to deny, that the Imitation of the Deity is a powerful Principle of Action. If so, it follows, that to communicate a just Idea of the divine Perfections to all Mankind, must tend to secure their Virtue, and promote their Happiness. 'Tis therefore equally ungenerous and impolitic, to suffer Mankind to live in Ignorance and Idolatry. Hence 'tis evident, that Reformations in Religion are not the ridiculous Things his Lordship would represent them; and that Christianity, if indeed it reveals the Truth, is a Religion in it's Tendency much more beneficial to Mankind than ancient Paganism.

'Tis no difficult Task to assign the original Cause of this so different and even opposite Genius of the Pagan Systems from that

* Eng. on Virtue.
of Christianity. In early and ignorant Ages, the Necessity of religious Belief and religious Establishments was seen by the Leaders of Mankind: On this Account they instituted the most salutary Forms and Doctrines, which their unexperienced Reason could suggest. As Nations grew wiser and more polished, they saw the Weakness and Absurdity of these established Systems; but thro' a Regard, and perhaps a mistaken one, to the public Good, were unwilling to discover these Defects and Absurdities to the People. Hence probably the Rise of esoteric and esoteric Doctrines. For the furthest that human Policy dared to go, was to reveal the Truth to a few Initiated: While the Bulk of Mankind, even in the wisest and politest Ages, continued the Dupes to the Prejudices and Superstitions of the most ignorant ones. On the contrary, it was a main Design of the Christian Dispensation, to dispel this Cloud of Ignorance, which excluded Mankind from all Participation of divine Truth; to reveal those just and sublime Ideas of the Divinity, which are the noblest, as they are the surest Foundation, not only of Piety, but of Morals: And which, so far as they can affect either Piety...
Piety or Morals (such is the Triumph of Christianity over the laboured Researches of false Wisdom) are no less intelligible to the Peasant than the Philosopher. On this Account, Christianity was perfect (relatively perfect) in its first Delineation: All Attempts to change or add to its Doctrines, have but discovered their own Absurdity: And Experience every Day more and more convinceth us, that the only Method of obtaining a pure and uncorrupt System of Practical Religion and moral Precepts, is to search for them in the uncommented Pages of the Gospel.

Thus, what was the Effect of Necessity among the Heathens, the noble Writer very partially attributes to Choice: He mistakes a Defect for an Excellence: And blindly prefers the Weakness of Man to the Wisdom of God.

Another Cavil frequently urged or insinuated by his Lordship against Christianity, seems to have been the natural Consequence of the last-mentioned. He much admires the Pagan Religions, as having been sociable, and mutually incorporated into each other: And often represents Christianity, as of an unsociable, surly, and solitary Complexion, tending
tending to destroy every other but itself. The Consequence of this, he tells us, hath been "a new Sort of Policy, which extends itself to another World, and hath made us "leap the Bounds of natural Humanity; "and out of a supernatural Charity, has "taught us the Way of plaguing one an- "other most devoutly." Now with regard to this pretended unsociable Temper of Christianity; it must be owned indeed, that our Religion tends to swallow up and de-
stroy every other, in the same Manner as Truth in every Subject tends to destroy Falsehood: That is, by rational Conviction. The same Objection might be urged against the Newtonian Philosophy, which destroyed the Cartesian Fables: Or against the Coper-
nican System, because the clumsy Visions of Ptolomy and Tycho-Brabe vanished before it. The same may be urged against the Use-
fulness of the great Source of Day, because it dims and extinguishes every inferior Lustre: For the glimmering Lamps of human Know-
lledge, lighted up by the Philosophers, served indeed to conduct them as a Light shining in a dark Place; but these must naturally be sunk in a superior Lustre, when
the Sun of Righteousness should arise. The Gospel therefore is so far unsociable, as to discredit Error; and is incompatible with this, as Light with Darkness: But not so unsociable, as to compel the Erroneous. As to the religious Debates, then, which Christianity hath occasioned, and the Wars and Massacres consequent upon them, which the noble Writer so justly detests; Christianity stands clear of the Charge, till it can be shewn that it countenanceth the inhuman Principle of Intolerance: And this, its bitterest Enemies can never do. 'Tis true, that if we be so irrational as to take our Idea of Christianity from the Representations of Enthusiasts and Bigots, nothing can appear more absurd and mischievous: As, in like Manner, if we consider the Heavens under the perplexed Revolutions and malignant Aspects of the old Astronomers and Astrologers, nothing can be more unworthy either of divine Wisdom or Goodness. But how can these false Images affect the noble Simplicity and Benignity of the Gospel, or the Solar System? To the Works and the Word of God, we must repair, for a true Idea of their undisguised Perfection: And there we shall read their divine Author, in the
and Christianity. So far therefore is Christianity from encouraging Wars and Massacres, on account of a Difference in Opinion, that its divine Founder hath expressly warned his Followers against the Suggestions of this horrid Temper: Nor can these fatal Consequences ever arise among Christians, till they have divested themselves of Christian Charity, and mistaken the very Principles of their Profession.

But the noble Writer proceeds to still more bitter Invectives, if possible, against Christianity. For he often insinuates, that the Prospect of Happiness and Misery in another Life, revealed in the Gospel, tends to the Destruction of all true Virtue. Indeed we cannot much wonder that his Lordship should treat Christianity in this Manner, when we consider what he hath thrown out against Religion in general, in this Respect. These Cavils have already been considered at large: Whatever therefore he hath insinuated against our Religion in particular, will naturally be referred to, and effectually be refuted by these more general Observations. However, there are

2 Luke ix. 3 B. 4 Wit and Hum. P. ii. § 3. 5 See above, Eff. ii. § 3.
two or three Passages on this Subject so remarkable, that they may seem to deserve a separate Consideration.

After having ridiculed and branded Christianity, as destroying the *disinterested* Part of Virtue, he tells us, "The Jews as well as Heathens were left to their Philosophy to be instructed in the sublime Part of Virtue, and induced by Reason to that which was never enjoined them by Command. No Premium or Penalty being enforced in these Cases, the disinterested Part subsisted, the Virtue was a free Choice, and the Magnanimity of the Act was left entire."

Here again the noble Writer hath got to his Peculiarities. What other Title this Passage may deserve, we shall soon discover. For, first, supposing his Assertion true, what he notes in the Jewish and Heathen Religions as an *Excellence*, had certainly been a *Defect*. For are not Hottentots, wild Indians, and Arabs, "left to their Philosophy, to be induced by Reason to that which was never enjoined them by Command? No Premium or Penalty

*Wit and Hum. P. ii. § 3.*
Christianity. 323

"being enforced in these Cases, the disinterested Part subsists, the Virtue is a free Choice, and the Magnanimity of the Act is left entire." Thus the noble Writer would again debase us into Savages; and, rather than not disgrace Christianity, would put the State of Palestine, Greece, and Rome, on a Level with that of the Cape of Good Hope: Blindly (or shall we say, knowingly?) disparaging, what he elsewhere so justly applauds, "Laws, Constitutions, civil and religious Rites, whatever civilizes or polishes rude Mankind."

But in Fact, neither the Jews nor civilized Heathens were ever tainted with this Phrenzy. They saw the Necessity of religious Belief; and as they saw its Necessity, so they enforced it. With regard to the Jews, the noble Writer contradicts himself within the Compass of ten Lines: For there he says, "their Religion taught no future State, nor exhibited any Rewards or Punishments, besides such as were temporal." This is the very Truth. Here then he owns a temporal Sanction of Premium and Penalty, Reward and Punishment: Yet in the Passage above cited, and

* See above, Eff. ii. § 10.  t Moralist, Part i. § 3.
On Revealed Religion

which stands close by the other in the Original, he says, "there was no Premium " or Penalty enforced, no Reward or Pu-" nishment!" His Lordship deals as fairly and consistently by the civilized Heathens: For, could he indeed have forgot the dis-tinguished Rank, which, in the Elysian Fields, was assigned to those who fell to save their Country?

Hic Manus ob Patriam pugnando vulnera passi—
Omnibus his nivea cinguntur tempora vita.

And now let the Impartial determine, whether the noble Writer's Observation hath more of Sagacity or of Truth in it.

But the Christian Doctrines relating to an Hereafter, are to undergo a yet severer Inquisition from the noble Writer: They are to be tortured and mangled on the Rack, of Wit shall I say, or of Buffoonry? " The " Misfortune is, we are seldom taught to " comprehend this SELF, by placing it in " a distinct View from its Representative " or Counterfeit. In our holy Religion, " which, for the greatest part, is adapted to " the very meanest Capacities, 'tis not to " be expected, that a Speculation of this

Eneid. lib. vi.

Kind,
and Christianity.

Kind should be openly advanced. 'Tis Sect. VI.

enough that we have Hints given us of a nobler Self, than that which is commonly supposed the Basis and Foundation of our Actions. Self-Interest is there taken as it is vulgarly conceived—In the same Manner as the celestial Phænomena are in the sacred Volumes generally treated according to common Imagination, and the then current System of Astronomy and natural Science; so the moral Appearances are in many Places preserved without Alteration, according to Vulgar Prejudice.---Our real and genuine Self is sometimes supposed that ambitious one, which is fond of Power and Glory; sometimes that childish one, which is taken with vain Shew, and is to be invited to Obedience by Promise of finer Habitations, precious Stones, and Metals, shining Garments, Crowns, and other such dazzling Beauties, by which another Earth, or material City is represented h.

This Passage contains two insinuated Charges of a very different Nature. The one is true, but no Objection: The other would indeed be an Objection, but that it is absolutely

b Solil. Part iii. § 1.

Y 3
On Revealed Religion

Tis true, "that our Religion is, for the greatest part, adapted to the very meanest Capacities; and that the celestial Phænomena are in the sacred Volumes generally treated according to "common Imagination," &c. And would the noble Writer indeed have had it otherwise? Would he indeed have had them spoken of, according to the philosophical Construction of the Universe, rather than the received Notions of Mankind? With how little Reason, we may soon be convinced, if we consider, First, that the End of Revelation was not to make Mankind Proficients in Philosophy, since the Situation of the Generality can never admit it: And had the Scriptures supposed this, (as indeed such a Conduct would have supposed it) this very Circumstance had been an Argument of their Falsehood. Secondly, even Philosophers themselves, tho' intimately acquainted with the Construction of the Universe, do still descend to the Level of Mankind, when they speak of the Phænomena of Nature: The Sun sets and rises, as it did three thousand Years ago: The Moon changes, wains, is new, and old: The Stars are in the Firmament, the Sun still
and Christianity still rules the Day, and the Moon the Night. The Reason is evident: Because astronomical Discoveries have not the least Influence on the Practice of Mankind: Because, altho' the natural Appearances of Things are merely relative to the Imagination only, yet they are, for that very Reason, necessary to be referred to, as the Imagination is the great universal Instrument of Life and human Action.

An Objection therefore to the Scriptures on this Account, betrays either a gross Misapprehension of human Nature, or the most unpardonable In sincerity; yet we find Objections of this kind frequently urged; as if, because the sacred Penmen were empowered by God to reveal to us a certain Measure of religious and moral Truth, suited to our present State, they must therefore be endowed with Omniscience; in order to make all Men not only good Subjects, but good Astronomers too!

But tho' it were Folly to object against the sacred Penmen, because they appear not to have been omniscient; yet I cannot conclude this Argument, without producing a remarkable Instance, wherein their very Ignorance of these speculative and unnecessary Truths...
On Revealed Religion

Essay Truths becomes a convincing Proof of their Veracity: A Circumstance which much more nearly concerns us. We read in the Book of Joshua, "And he said in the Sight of Israel, Sun, stay thou in Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon: And the Sun abode, and the Moon stood still, and hasted not to go down for a whole Day." Here, the standing still of these Luminaries is related in such a Manner as concurs with the common Appearances of Things; and yet consists with the best Discoveries in Astronomy, tho' unknown to the Writer. For we are now assured, that, if the Sun stood still, it must have been by suspending the diurnal Rotation of the Earth: The standing still of the Moon was therefore the necessary Consequence. This the Writer appears not to have known: Yet he relates the Fact, tho' it was of no Importance with regard to that Event for which the Miracle was wrought. It is therefore of singular Force in proving the Veracity of the Writer, because, had it not been true in Fact, it is a Circumstance which could never have occurred to him.

The noble Writer's other Charge relating to the moral Representations of the Joshua, x. Scriptures,
and Christianity.

Scriptures, would indeed be of Weight, if it were founded in Truth: But so far from this, that he hath utterly reversed the Fact. For in Reality, these sensible Representations of visible Beauty and Glory, are only occasionally or accidentally hinted; while the whole Weight and Energy of the Gospel is employed in enforcing the Idea of moral Perfection, of our nobler Self, of Self-Interest in the higher Sense, of the Necessity of extirpating every meaner Passion, and cherishing the great one of unbounded Love, as the necessary and only Discipline that can qualify us for future Happiness. 'Tis evident that the noble Writer lays the principal Stress of his Charge, on the Apocalypse; a Work in it's whole Turn strictly Allegorical, and therefore necessarily conversant in Imagery and visible Representation. To this he hath most perversely added a figurative Expression of St. Paul, who, writing to a People among whom the Prize-Races prevailed, represents the Christian Progress as a Contest of this Kind; and shews it's Superiority over the Former, "because, faith he, "they labour to obtain a corruptible, but "we an incorruptible Crown." In the mean Time
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Essay III.

Time he hath omitted the many Discourses, Parables, Maxims, of our Saviour, in which he perpetually exhorts his Disciples to endeavour after unfeigned Virtue and universal Benevolence, as the only Means that can bring them to future Perfection. He hath forgot too the repeated Exhortations of St. Paul, who sets Charity so high above every other Gift or Possession, and adds, the Reason of it's Preeminence, "because it shall never fail." 'Tis true, indeed, as the noble Writer observes (with what Intention, 'tis no difficult Matter to determine) "that our holy Religion is for the greatest part adapted to the very meanest Capacities:" We may add, "and to the very worst of Dispositions too." And 'tis one of it's chief Glories, that it is so. Therefore we find it enforcing every Motive that can work on every Mind: Which must surely be acknowledged as the Character of the Religion that should come from him who knew what was in Man. But if the noble Writer would further insinuate, that the Idea of future Happiness ought to be confined to that of virtuous Enjoyment, whereas the Christian Religion doth not so confine it: We have already seen, that, from the
We now come to the Examination of a Passage more extraordinary and original than any yet produced. The noble Writer tells us, "I could be almost tempted to think, that the true Reason why some of the most heroic Virtues have so little Notice taken of them in our holy Religion, is, because there would have been no Room left for Disinterestedness, had they been intitled to a Share of that infinite Reward, which Providence has by Revelation assigned to other Duties. Private Friendship, and Zeal for the Public and our Country, are Virtues purely voluntary in a Christian. They are no essential Parts of his Charity. He is not so tied to the Affairs of this Life; nor is he obliged to enter into such Engagements with this lower World, as are of no Help to him in acquiring a better. His Conversation is in Heaven. Nor has he Occasion for such supernumerary Cares and Embarrassments here on Earth, as may obstruct his Way thither, or retard him in the careful Task of working out his own Salvation."  

k See above, Eff. ii. § 9.  

1 Wit and H. Part ii. § 3.
We have already seen, that the real Nature of Virtue consists "in procuring or "promoting the greatest public Happiness:" And that this Truth is often, occasionally, acknowledged by Lord Shaftesbury himself. Consequently, the highest or most heroic Virtue, is that which tends to accomplish this great End: Nor can any pretended Virtue be either great or heroic that tends to obstruct or destroy it.

On this plain Principle, self-evident to unbyassed Reason, let us examine the Passage now before us. And first, as to private Friendship, which, the noble Writer says, "is a Virtue purely voluntary in a Christian."—Let us consider how far it may be regarded as a Virtue at all.—Now, on strict Inquiry we shall find, that the extreme Degree of Friendship recommended and applauded by the Ancients, and here patronized by the noble Author, is essentially repugnant to true Virtue: In Friendship they placed the chief Happiness: — And if this consists in the supreme Love of one, it must needs diminish, if not extinguish, the Love of all; because our chief or whole Attention must be employed, our every View and Design centered in giving Pleasure or procuring Happiness.
and Christianity.

Happiness to one Individual. And this is the very fairest Light it can be view'd in. For we shall further see, how little it generally partakes of the Nature of true Virtue, if we consider whence it hath it's Rise. This is universally allowed to be, " a Similarity of Disposition, Will, and Manners." This Circumstance demonstrates, that in general it must be contrary to Virtue: For hence the general Good must be often sacrificed to gratify the Will of one. Of this dreadful Effect, Instances might be produced almost innumerable. Let one suffice. " Between Tiberius Gracchus and C. Blossius, a dear and perfect Friendship subsisted: The latter being seized for aiding the former in his Conspiracy, was brought before the Consuls. He pleaded his Friendship to Gracchus in Excuse for his Crime." He was then asked, " What, suppose he had bid you fire the Capitol, would you have done it?" To this he boldly replied, " He never would have laid me under such a Necessity; but if he had, I would have obeyed him." A thorough Friend sure: But a Vile Citizen; notwithstanding the
artful Gloss of an ingenious Modern, who
hath attempted to make out the Innocence
of his Intentions.

'Tis true, the Advocates for this Attachment sometimes assert, that it cannot consist but with Virtue. That it ought not, is certain: That it cannot, or doth not, is a groundless Conceit; unless they chuse to make this Circumstance a Part of the Definition, which were idle Sophistry. But if by Friendship be meant, what indeed is always meant, "a violent Love and Attachment to another on account of a Similarity of Manners;" this, 'tis certain, hath often, nay most commonly, subsisted without Virtue: Among Savages, Robbers, Heroes, and Banditti. In Lucian's Tract on Friendship we find, that out of Twelve notable Instances alleged, near half the Number were supported at the Expence of Justice or Humanity; either by the Commission of Rapine, Adultery, or Murder, or by aiding the Escape of those who ought to have suffered for these enormous Crimes. Will any one allege the Emperor Tiberius, or his Favourite Sejanus, as Patterns of Virtue? Yet their Friendship was so remarkable,

* See Montaigne's Essay on this Subject.
and Christianity.

that, in Honour of it, Altars were dedicated to Friendship by a senatorial Decree. Nay, some of the applauded Instances appealed to, by the noble Author, in his Comment on this Passage, are even notorious in this Respect. Such were Theseus and Pirithous, equally remarkable for Friendship, Rapes, and Plunder. And such Instances may still be found in every savage Country; where the strongest Friendships are commonly formed: Where Men thus leagued go upon bold Adventures; and hazard Life for each other without Reluctance, while they ravish their Neighbours Wives, and carry off their Cattle.

With as little Reason can it be urged, that Friendships in general are disinterested, so as to aspire to the Name of Merit. For Merit, if it exists, can only arise from Virtue: And Virtue, we have seen, doth not essentially belong to Friendship. Nay, in Lucian's Tract, 'tis warmly debated between the contending Parties, whether Afection or private Advantage hath a more considerable Share in this applauded Union. Indeed the civilized and haughty Greek stands upon the Punctilio of Honour, and piques himself on the Notion of Disinterest: But
But the undisguised Scythian insists, that mutual Advantage and Support are the ruling Motives. However, in Conclusion they fairly agree, in comparing a Set of fast Friends to Geryon with three Heads and six Hands, enabled, thro' this Increase of Strength, to overturn all Opposition. But suppose Affection the ruling Principle, as unquestionably it often is, where is the Merit, while confined to one Person? Nay, it must rather lean toward Demerit, because it appears, 'tis rather dangerous than favourable to public Affection and Virtue. 'Tis evident then, that the friendly Affection is no more meritorious than the conjugal, paternal, or filial Affection; which being of a contracted Nature, are often consistent with great Baseness of Mind, and destructive of a more enlarged Benevolence.

9 Luciani Toxaris.

p Thus a Writer of distinguished Abilities: "Many Instances occur in History and daily Experience, of Men, not ashamed to commit base and selfish Enormities, who have retained a Tenderness for their Posterity by the strong and generous Instinct of Nature. The Story of Licinius Macer, who was Father to Calvus the great Orator, is very remarkable, as related by a Roman Annalist. Having gone thro' the Office of Praetor, and governed a Province, he was accused, upon returning home, of Extortion what
what Degree of Merit or Disinterest there is in Regards of this Nature, when separate from more extensive ones, we may learn from the noble Writer himself, who says, "there is a Selfishness in the Love that is paid to a Wife, and in the Attendance on a Family, and all the little Affairs of it, which, had I my full Scope of Action in the Public, I should hardly have submitted to."

So far then is clear, That Friendship, or "a violent Affection founded on a Similarity of Disposition and Manners," is more likely to produce Vice than Virtue; as it tends to fix such Habits of Mind as must lessen our Concern for the general Good. And in Fact, every one's Experience will point out to him Numbers of Men, naturally benevolent to all, but so strongly by-assed and drawn in by particular Attach-

"and Abuses of his Power. The very Morning of his Trial he strangled himself, after having sent Word to Cicero, who was preparing to plead against him, that, being determined to put an End to his Life before Sentence, (tho' the Penalty did not extend to taking it away) the Prosecution could not go on, and his Fortune would be saved to the Benefit of his Son." — Considerations on the Law of Forfeiture, p. 32.

On Revealed Religion

Sayments, that their regards and Beneficence are centered wholly on a select few; while the rest of Mankind pass unheeded and unassisted, and have no Share in their Benevolence, further than what Self-Deceit throws out, in unmeaning Wishes for their Welfare.

'Tis no less evident, that, thro' the natural Advantages of this partial Alliance, Mankind must ever be prone to embrace it, in Exclusion of more extensive Affections, where no such Advantages can follow. It would therefore have been a Defect in the Christian Religion, to have enjoined or even recommended it in this Extreme. Accordingly we find, in the Gospel, every Attachment of this Kind, however natural and alluring it may be, set very little above the lowest Selfishness, and justly represented as entirely consistent with it. "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? Do not the Publicans even the same?"

Besides, there is something so extraordinary in the noble Writer's Scheme of "enjoining Friendship," as sufficiently exposteth its own Weakness. Friendship, his Lordship

Matthew v.
Lordship allows, can only arise "from a Consent and Harmony of Minds." How then could Christianity have enjoined us the Practice of this supposed Virtue? What must it have enjoined us? Why, to go in quest of a Mind resembling our own. It might with equal Propriety have enjoined us to go in quest of a Face resembling our own: And with as much Reason, for all the Purposes of true Virtue.

But if by Friendship be meant, what indeed is not generally meant, "A particular Love and Esteem for the virtuous or worthy," in which Sense alone it can have any Tendency to produce true Virtue; then we may justly affirm, that it is recommended in the Gospel, both by Example and by Precept. It is naturally involved in that all-comprehensive Command of universal Charity: For tho' many have been zealous in their Friendships, while they were insensible to public Affection; yet, such is the Temperament of human Nature, that no Instance was ever known, of a Man zealous for the Happiness of all, yet remiss in or incapable of a true Friendship for the Worthy. It is recommended by St. Paul,

*In the Note.*
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Essay who says, that "peradventure for a good Man, one would even dare to die." It is recommended by our Saviour's Example, who selected a beloved Disciple as his bosom Friend, whose Writings are the Overflowings of a Heart filled with the purest and most unbounded Love." Above all, it is recommended by our Saviour in that noble and divine Passage; "Who is my Mother or my Brethren? Even he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, he is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother."

So much for the spurious Virtue of private Friendship: Let us next consider the noble Writer's Charge against Christianity, on account of its not enjoining "a Zeal for the Public and our Country:" For this too, it seems, "is a Virtue purely voluntary in a Christian." Now all the Absurdities which load his Charge with Regard to Friendship, fall with equal Weight on this groundless Imputation. For if by "Zeal for the Public and our Country," be meant, a Zeal that is inconsistent with the Rights and common Welfare of Man-kind, 'tis so far from being a Virtue, that, as in the Case of Friendship, it is really a Crime.

St. John. Matth. xii.
**Christianity.**

Crime, because it tends to produce the most fatal Consequences. And an Army of victorious Warriors returning triumphant on this vile Principle, however graced with the flattering Title of Heroes, and Ensigns of Glory, are in Truth no better than a Band of public Robbers: or, as our great Poet, a Christian and a Lover of Mankind, finely expresseth it,

An impious Crew
Of Men conspiring to uphold their State,
By worse than hostile Deeds; violating the Ends For which our Country is a Name so dear.

Now 'tis evident beyond a Doubt, that at the Time when our Saviour appeared, this destructive Partiality, this avowed Conspiracy against the common Rights of Mankind, was universally prevalent among the most civilized Nations. The Jews were not exempted from this common Excess. "Inter ipsos Fides obstinata, adversus alios hosile Odium," was their Character among the Heathens. The Greeks and Romans committed and boasted of the most cruel Enormities, conquered and enslaved innocent Nations, plundered Cities, and laid...

*Sampson Agonistes.*
Essay

waste Kingdoms, thro' this absurd and impi- ous Love of their Country; a Principle no better in many of its Consequences, than the most horrid and accursed Bigotry. It had therefore been an essential Defect, nay rather a mischievous Absurdity, in the Christian Religion, to have enjoined, encouraged, or countenanced a Partiality unjust in itself; to which, from Views of private Advantage, Mankind must ever be prone; and which, at the Time when Christianity began to spread, was indeed the reigning and predominant Error.

But if by "Zeal for the Public, and Love of our Country" be meant, such a Regard to its Welfare as shall induce us to sacrifice every View of private Interest for its Accomplishment, yet still in Subordina-
tion to the greater Law of universal Justice, this is naturally, nay necessarily involved in the Law of universal Charity. The noble Writer indeed affirms, "it is no essen-
tial Part of the Christian's Charity." On the contrary, it is a chief Part of the Chris-
tian's Charity. It comes nobly recommend-
ed by the Examples of Jesus and St. Paul: The one wept over the approaching Deso-
lation of his Country: The other declared his
and Christianity. his Willingness to be cut off from the Christian Community, if by this Means he might save his Countrymen. And that it necessarily ariseth from the Principle of universal Love will be evident, if we consider the Nature and Situation of Man. His Nature is such, that he inevitably contracts the strongest Affection for those with whom he converseth most intimately; and whose Manners and Relations, civil and religious, are most nearly connected with his own. His Situation is such, that he seldom hath an Opportunity of doing good Offices to any Society of Men, save only those of his own Country; all others being naturally removed beyond the narrow Sphere of private Beneficence, Hence the great Precept of universal Charity doth essentially involve "a Zeal for the "Public, and Love of our Country:" At once it curbs the Exorbitance of this natural Partiality, and carries it to its full Perfection.

The Necessity of this great regulating Principle will further appear, if we consider, that, with regard to the Conduct of separate States and Kingdoms towards each other, no Sanctions of human Law can ever take place. In this respect all Nations must ever be in a State of Nature. There was therefore
therefore a more particular Necessity, on this Account, of regulating their Conduct towards each other, by the great Law of universal Charity.

It may seem strange, that the noble Writer should be ignorant of these Truths. But after the Imputations he hath here thrown on Christianity, it will surely appear more strange, that he was not ignorant of them: And that these bitter Sarcasms were thrown out against the clear Convictions of his own Mind. Yet nothing is more evident, as will now appear. That he understood the Nature of Christian Charity, is indisputable: He defines it, and properly, in the Note annexed to the Passage here refer'd to. In another Place, he calls it "the Principle of Love, the greatest Principle of our Religion."" In a following Paragraph he calls it "that divine Love which our Religion teaches."" But what is of all most remarkable; he sets it under the new and whimsical Denominations of Good-Nature and Friendship to Mankind, far above private Friendship and Love of our Country. Take the Passages as they lie in the noble Writer. "Can any Friendship be so heroic
and Christianity. 345
" as that towards Mankind? or particular
" Friendship well subsist, without such an
" inlarged Affection?" Again: "Theocles
" had almost convinced me, that to be a
" Friend to any one in particular, 'twas
" necessary first to be a Friend to Man-
" kind." Lastly, and above all: "And
" can your Country, and what is more, your
" Kind, require less Kindness from you,
" or deserve less to be consider'd, than even
" one of these Chance-Creatures? --- O Phi-
" locles, how little do you know the Extent
" and Power of Good-Nature, and to what
" an heroic Pitch a Soul may rise, which
" knows the thorow Force of it; and distri-
" buting it rightly, frames in itself an equal,
" just, and universal Friendship?" Here
then we see the former Paragraph utterly
reversed. For "universal Love is now the
" only heroic Principle:" And "private
" Friendship and the Love of our Country
" are only commendable, as they make
" subordinate Parts of it."

To this astonishing and wilful Perver-
sion of the moral Principles of Christianity,
we may add the subsequent Part of the
same invenomed Paragraph. For he pro-
ceeds

Ib. § 1. a Ib. § 2. b Ib. § 1.
On Revealed Religion

Essay III.

ceeds to insinuate, as if Christian Charity were no active Principle; but such as leads its Proselytes to a State of mere Contemplation and Inaction, without Regard to social Life, and the Affairs of this lower World. We may defy the noble Writer's most zealous Admirers to find any other rational Construction for the following Passage. "The "Christian, he says, is not obliged to en-"ter into such Engagements with this lower "World, as are of no help to him in ac-"quiring a better. His Conversation is in "Heaven. Nor has he Occasion for such "supernumerary Cares and Embarrassments "here on Earth, as may obstruct his Way "thither, or retard him in the careful Task "of working out his own Salvation." Un-
exampled Prevarication! thrown out a-
against that Religion which enjoins an active Virtue, a Regard to the present Happiness of Man in every possible Relation, as the only Way to obtain Felicity hereafter: Against that Religion, whose Founder did not idly harangue in a Closet upon Beauty, Virtue, and Decorum, amidst the Indolence and Pride of Life; but practised the divine Truths he taught, and "went about doing Good," a-
and Christianity. amongst the meanest and most despised of his Fellow-Citizens.

To be unmoved on this Occasion were Stupidity; not to confess it, Cowardice. Error should be exposed with Calmness; but Dishonesty merits our Abhorrence.

Yet from these Cavils tho' groundless, and Misrepresentations tho' Voluntary, we may draw an Observation which highly recommends Christianity. We may hence see the superior Excellence and Dignity of its moral Precepts, above the most applauded among the Heathen: And how nobly, by one great Principle, it rectifies every little Partiality to which the human Heart is subject. For this is clear, that in one Age or Nation, Friendship hath been idolized as the supreme Virtue; in another, Hospitality; in a Third, the Love of our Country;

Indeed the noble Writer pursuing the same kind Intention to Christianity, pretends that the Law of Hospitality, or Regard to Strangers, among the ancient Heathens, was equivalent (nay he gives a very ingenious Suggestion, as if it was far superior) to Christian Charity. "Such, says he, was ancient Heathen Charity, and pious Duty towards the whole of Mankind; both those of different Nations and different Worships." (Misc. iii. c. i. in the Notes.) For Instances of this he is forced to go back as far as Homer, who indeed has given us some fine Pictures of ancient Manners of this kind, in his Odyssey. The
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E S S A Y

III.

in a Fourth, enthusiastic Contemplation; in a Fifth, the Austerities of the Hermit; in a Sixth, the external Practice of Religion; in a Seventh, which is the fashionable Peculiarity of our own Times, occasional Acts of Humanity and Compassion, while the more extensive and public Views of Benevolence are neglected or even derided. How different, how superior, is the great Christian Principle of universal Love! Which rising gradually, by a Progress thro’ all the noble Writer might have found others, in no Respect inferior, in the Old Testament, recorded long before universal Charity was ever thought of, in the Stories of Abraham and Lot. The Truth is, the Guest or Stranger was held sacred, because he was under the Protection of his Host: It was therefore deemed criminal, to violate a Trust thus reposed. But it happens unfortunately for his Lordship’s Argument, that in these Old Times Rapine and Plunder were as much in Vogue as either Friendship or Hospitality, and equally creditable. These phantom Appearances of Virtue are still to be seen in the Arabian Deserts as frequently as ever. If a Traveller comes to the Door of a wild Arab’s Tent at Night, he is received with so boundless an Hospitality, that the Host would expose himself, his Wife, and Children, to certain Destruction, to save the Life of his Guest. Had this hospitable Savage met the Traveller in the Deserts at Noon, he would have strip’d him to the Skin, and, on the least Resistance, laid him dead at his Feet. And this was the true Extent of the noble Writer’s boasted Heathen Charity.
and Christianity. 

less enlarged Affections towards Parents, Children, Friends, Country, and spreading till it embraces all Mankind, and every Creature that hath Life, forms that perfect Virtue in which human Weakness is most prone to be defective, and which implies and includes every moral Perfection. Christianity alone hath kindled in the Heart of Man this vital Principle; which beaming there as from a Center, like the great Fountain of Light and Life that sustains and cheers the attendant Planets, renders its Proselytes indeed “burning and shining Lights,” shedding their kindly Influence on all around them, in that just Proportion, which their respective Distances may demand.

SECTION VII.

The preceding Remarks may sufficiently obviate every Cavil of the noble Writer against the essential Parts of Christianity. But as his Lordship hath casually interspersed several Random-Insinuations, we must be content to receive them as they happen to appear, since they are of that disjointed Kind as to be incapable of Connection.
In a marginal Note, he gives an Account of the Migration of the Israelites from Egypt, under the Conduct of Moses. He thinks proper to reject the clear Account which the Jewish Legislator himself gives, "That they departed, in order to worship the true God;" and preposterously prefers what Tacitus and Justin have said on that Subject; who affirm indeed, but without Proof, "that the Jews were driven out of Egypt on account of their Leprosy." This Partiality might of itself appear mysterious enough, when we consider the particular and consistent Account given us by the very Leader of the Expedition: For, what should we think of the Man, who should prefer the random Conjectures of an ignorant Modern to Xenophon's Retreat, or Caesar's Commentaries? But the noble Writer's Partiality will appear still more unaccountable, if we consider the following Passage of Strabo; a Writer as much beyond Tacitus in Candour, as beyond Justin (if indeed Justin and not Trogus Pompeius, be answerable for this Slander) in true Judgment. This Author, Strabo, second to none in Antiquity, speaks

Misc. ii. c. i. Notes.
and Christianity.

speaks thus: "Moses, an Egyptian Priest, retreated along with a Number of religious Followers. For he affirmed and taught, that the Egyptians were mistaken, who imaged the Deity under the Forms of the Brute-Creation; as likewise the Libyans and Greeks, who represented the Gods under the human Shape. He held that alone to be God, which comprehends every living Creature, the Earth, and Sea; which is called Heaven, the World, or the universal Nature; whose Image, who that is in his right Mind, would dare to form out of any earthly Materials? Rejecting therefore all Use of Images, he determined to dedicate to him a Temple worthy of his Nature, and worship him without Images. — On this Principle he persuaded and brought over many well-disposed Men, and led them forth into that Country where now Jerusalem is built." A noble Testimony, sure, from

a Heathen
on Revealed Religion

Essay a Heathen Writer: Less he could not say, if he was well informed; and, unless he had embraced the Jewish Religion, he could not have said more.

There is another Passage (Misc. v. c. 1.) which discovers somewhat of unfair dealing in the noble Writer. In the Margin, he prettily enough criticizes the Preface to St. Luke’s Gospel. But in the Text he hath paraphrased the Evangelist’s Expression, in a Manner so different from anything St. Luke either wrote or meant, as must not a little astonish every candid Reader. St. Luke says, “It seemed good to him to write in Order the Things that he knew.” To which the noble Writer adds, “As there were many, it seems, long afterwards, who did; and undertook accordingly, to write in Order, and as seemed good to them, &c.—What shall we say of the noble Writer on this Occasion? Why, this only; “That

ṣυρατον και κοσμον, και την των οιων Φυσιν. Τυτυ
δε τις αυ εικανα πλατειν βαθρεων νυν εχουν ομοιαν
tiνα των παση ημιν; αλιε εαν δε πασαν ξανοποιαν,
tημενος αφοισιασιας και σηχον αξιολογον τιμον ειδις
κωσις. Εκενος μεν υν τωιαυα λεγον επεισεν ευγνω-
μονας ανδρας, υμο ολιγους, και απηγαγεν επι τον τοπον
tωλο, οπι υνε εσι το εν τοις Ιεροσολυμοις κτισμα.
Strabo, l. xvi.

“in-
and Christianity.

"inasmuch as it seemed good to him to inter-
pret this Preface of St. Luke, he there-
fore thought himself at Liberty to inter-
pret it as it seemed good to him."

There are three more Subjects, which his Lordship hath thought fit to represent in the Manner which seemed good to him. These are, first, the divine Fore-knowledge communicated to Joseph in the Interpretation of Pharaoh's Dreams. Secondly, the Rise of Bigotry, or religious Intolerance and Persecution. Thirdly, and principally, The Relation which the Jewish Institutions bear to the Egyptian. In all these, the noble Writer hath employed every Art of Insinuation and Address, that he might throw an Odium on the Mosaic Dispensation. These Passages might well merit a particular Consideration, had I not been happily prevented by my most learned Friend, who hath fully exposed their Weakness in that inestimable Treasure of all true Knowledge, The divine Legation of Moses. Thither the Reader is refer'd; where he will find these Questions treated with that Reach and Mastery

See Misc. ii. c. 1
It may now be necessary to examine the third Chapter of the noble Writer's second Miscellany; where he makes it his Pretence "to prove the Force of Humour in Religion." Of which it may be said, that it is the truest Piece of Random-Work, the most genuine Farce, that is perhaps to be met with in any Writer of whatever Age or Nation. He divides it (as every Farce ought to be divided) into three Acts. In its Progress we are carried into a very Fairy-Land of Thought, if not more properly a confused Chaos. For first, he sets about, with great Solemnity, to prove, "that Wit and Humour are corroborative of Religion, and promotive of true Faith:" To prove this, a Story is told, by which it appears, that not Wit and Humour, but good Humour or Easiness of Temper is thus corroborative and promotive: Then, in Conclusion, Wit and Humour come in again, to overturn all that hath been done, and shew that good Humour hath suffered itself to be ridiculously imposed upon.

* With relation to the first of these Points, see the Div. Leg. vol. ii. p. 164. For the second, see Ib. Book ii. § 6. For the third, see Book iv. § 6. passim.
and Christianity.

Tho' it doth not appear that our modern Advocates for Wit and Humour are so nearly interested in their Fate as they seem to think themselves; yet it must be owned their Generosity is so much the more to be applauded, in thus pleading the Cause of Clients who never employed them. However, taking for granted what seems to be the real Foundation of their Writings on this Subject, "that talking in Praise of Wit and Humour is a Proof of their being possessed of them, and that consequently they are Parties in the Cause;" I shall not envy the noble Writer any Man's Admiration, who may think proper to esteem him a Wit, on account of the grotesque Appearances he assumes throughout this present Miscellany. 'Tis my Intention only to convince the plain Reader, that this supposed Wit is by no means philosophical.

The first Head, therefore, he tells us, is "to make it appear, that Wit and Humour are corroborative of Religion and promotive of true Faith." To this Purpose he tires us with a Story, not the most elegantly plann'd, in my Apprehension, of a "Club of merry Gentlemen, who in a travelling Expedition meeting with sorry Roads and worst
worse Fare, laugh'd themselves into a Belief, that both Roads, Accommodations, and Cookery, were perfectly good." What follows is the Moral or Application of this curious Conceit. " Had I to deal with a malicious Reader, he might perhaps pretend to infer from this Story of my travelling Friends, that I intended to represent it as an easy Matter for People to persuade themselves into what Opinion or Belief they pleased."

Now without troubling ourselves to enquire, how far this Story is a Proof of the noble Writer's fundamental Maxim, "That Ridicule is a Test of Truth;" let us proceed to the intended Moral; which seems evidently calculated to throw a false Light on religious Belief; by representing it as the mere Effect of Prejudice, Self-Imposition, and Deceit. To rescue it, therefore, from this insinuated Calumny, we need not deny, but insist, that the Passions, false Interests, and Prejudices of Mankind, must indeed for ever hang as a Byass upon their Opinions. But it must be further observed too, that these Passions and false Interests will at least as often prejudice them against Religion, as in its Favour. 'Tis true, there are Prejudices
and Christianity. 357

...dices in Favour of Religion, arising from Education; but there are Prejudices against it too, arising from vicious Passions. Some are sanguine in their Hopes, and hence, while their Conduct is virtuous, wish, and therefore believe Religion to be true: Others are sanguine in their Hopes, but abandoned in their Conduct, and therefore live themselves into a Belief that Religion is false. Some, thro' a Dread of Annihilation; persuade themselves beyond the Strength of Evidence: Others, thro' the Prevalence of a suspicious Cast of Mind, reject even what is probable. Thus Passions and Prejudices work powerfully indeed; but they work both for and against Religion. It should seem, then, that the noble Writer's Moral, which he aims at Religion, may with equal Force be apply'd to Infidelity: For it is but supposing a Man given up to Vanity or Vice, and we shall soon see him enter into such a Plot as this against his own Understanding, and endeavour by all possible Means to persuade both himself and others of what he thinks convenient and useful to Disbelieve. 'Tis idle, therefore to insist on the Prejudices either for or against Religion: They will both naturally arise;
But we may safely leave it to any one's Determination, which Temper of Mind is the most amiable, that which entertains Prejudices in favour of Religion, or against it.

The noble Writer proceeds to his second Head; but seems at the same time conscious how little it was to any good Purpose. However, in Failure of Truth and Method, he again hath recourse to what he seems to think Wit and Humour; and which, for aught I know, may pass for such among his Admirers. "However, says he, left I should be charged for being worse than my Word, I shall endeavour to satisfy my Reader, by pursuing my Method proposed; if peradventure he can call to Mind what that Method was. Or if he cannot, the Matter is not so very important, but that he may safely pursue his Reading without further Trouble."

But tho' it was prudently done in the noble Writer, to throw the Subject of his second Head into Shades; yet for the Sake of Truth, we must drag it into Light. It was therefore to prove, "That Wit and Humour are used as the proper Means of pro-
promoting true Faith, by the holy Founders of Religion." But when we come to the Point, for Wit and Humour, by virtue of a certain Dexterity of Hand, the Reader is again unexpectedly presented with good Humour in their Stead. This, it will be said, is nimble dealing; but what of that, so long as it may tend to disgrace Christianity and its Founder? The noble Writer's Application, therefore, is still more extraordinary. "The Affection and Love which procures a true Adherence to the new religious Foundation, must depend either on a real or counterfeit Goodness in the religious Founder: Whatever ambitious Spirit may inspire him; whatever savage Zeal or persecuting Principle may lie in reserve, ready to disclose itself when Authority and Power is once obtained; the first Scene of Doctrine, however, fails not to present us with the agreeable Views of Joy, Love, Meekness, Gentleness, and Moderation."—To speak my inmost Sentiments of this Passage, it is of too black a Nature to deserve a Reply. There are certain Degrees of Calumny so flagrant, as injured Truth disdains to answer; and this is of the Kind. On this Occasion, therefore,
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Before, we shall leave the noble Writer to the Reflections of every honest Man; in Conformity to the Example of that blessed Person, "who when he was reviled, reviled not " again.""

The next Circumstance in holy Writ, that falls under his Lordship's Animadversion, is what he calls "The famous Entry " or high Dance performed by David in " the Procession of the sacred Coffer." In which he hath again represented Things as it seemed good to him. Here, by confounding ancient with modern Manners (in such a Way as is quite unworthy of his Character, and suited only to the Genius of a Coffee-house Freethinker) he hath endeavoured to bring down the solemn Procession of a grand religious Festival, to a Level with the Merriments of an Apish Dancing-Master. This Representation may very probably pass current among many of his Admirers; so that it had been necessary to set the Matter in its true Light; but that here too, I am happily prevented by a judicious Writer, who hath done all imaginable Justice to the Argument; and effectually ex-

\[ h \text{ See above, § 3. of this Essay, p. 269.} \]
His Lordship now proceeds to the Story of the Prophet Jonah, which he hath burlesqued and turned to Farce with that Delicacy, so peculiar to himself. The Story itself is indeed authenticated by our Saviour's Mention of it, as emblematical of his own Death and Resurrection. Its Moral is excellent; being an illustrious Display of the divine Mercy to penitent and returning Sinners, exemplified in God's remitting the Punishment denounced, and sparing a devoted City on its sincere Repentance; as also of the Frailty and Imperfection of the best of Men, set forth in the Prophet's Behaviour on the Occasion. To this we may add "the Propriety of the Miracle recorded," which was itself an extraordinary and most-awakening "Instance of Punishment inflicted on Disobedience, and remitted on Repentance;" and therefore bearing a strong Relation to the Event for which it was wrought; being peculiarly adapted, when made known to the Ninevites, to induce them to hearken to the Prophet's Preaching, to believe what

1 See Dr. Leland's Answer to the Moral Philosopher, p. 291, &c.
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he denounced and promised, and rouze them at once into a Fear of God's Justice, and a Reliance on his Mercy.

Such then being the real Nature of the Fact; the Secret of the noble Writer's polite Representation lies in his burlesquing the Circumstances of the supposed Dialogue between God and the Prophet; an easy Task for any one who is disingenuous or ignorant enough to represent as strictly literal, what is evidently parabolical; according to the frequent and known Manner of Composition in the earliest Ages. This his Lordship seems to have been aware of: "Whatsoever of this Kind may be allegorically understood, or in the Way of Parable or Fable, &c." Now had he treated the Scripture-Story with the same Candour which he affords to other ancient Writers, he would not have abused this Passage in so unworthy a Manner. A Writer of no Abilities, if provided only with a sufficient Quantity of Spleen and false Conceit,

k In the xith Chapter of St. Luke, our Saviour says, that "Jonas was a Sign unto the Ninevites." This evidently implies, that he considered this Miracle, and the Fate of Jonas, as an Example of Warning to that People; in the Manner here represented.

l See the Div. Leg. vol. ii. where a full Account is given of the Origin and Progress of this kind of Writing.
and Christianity.

ceit, might easily ridicule his favourite Piece, "The Judgment of Hercules": And to a raw Imagination, disgrace that instructive Fable, by burlesquing the supposed Conference between the Goddesses and the Heroe. Virgil hath in Fact been so served. And if Works of mere Invention, and of the heroic Kind, studiously contrived to avoid every thing low, obscure, or equivocal, are subject to this Abuse; can we wonder, if the succinct History of an ancient Fact, recording the Dispensations of Providence, a Matter very obscure in itself, and relative to ancient Manners so distant from our own, should be liable to the false and dishonest Lights of Buffoonry; We may further observe, that the noble Writer's Ridicule sometimes falls on divine Providence itself: "His Tutor had good Eyes, and a long Reach; he overtook the Renegade at Sea, &c.---Could an Epicurean have used more indecent Language?

His Lordship goes on, to ridicule "the Descriptions, Narrations, Expressions, and Phrases" of holy Scripture: But these we shall pass over at present, as they will deserve a separate Consideration. He touches once more on the Patriarch Abraham; and
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They who are curious enough to look for the Objection, may find a full Answer to it in the Place here referred to.

The next, and only remaining Circumstance worthy of Notice in this Miscellany, is a pretended Translation from Plutarch: In which the noble Writer deals as honourably by that Author, as before by Gorgias or Aristotle. But here too, I am prevented by the learned Phileleutherus Lipsiensis: However, as his Lordship's Conduct is remarkable on this Occasion, it may not be improper to exhibit a View of it in the great Critic's Words; who, it must be owned, hath chastised the noble Writer somewhat roughly, and Aristarchus-like.

"He (Mr. Collins) quotes the Place as it is translated forsooth in the Characteristics, a Book writ by an Anonymous, but whoever he is, a very whimsical and conceited Author. O wretched Grecians (so that Author renders Plutarch) who bring into Religion that frightful Mien of sordid and vilifying Devotion, ill-favoured Humiliation and

See above, Essay i. § ix.
and Christianity. 

"Contrition, abject Looks and Countenances, and, in the Act of Worship, Distortions, constrained and painful Postures of the Body, wry Faces, beggarly Tones, Mumpings, Grimaces, Cringings, and the rest of this Kind. --- Thus far that nameless Opiniatre: and our worthy Writer (Mr. Collins) introduces it with a grave Air, that Plutarch thus satirizes the public Forms of Devotion; which yet are such, as, in almost all Countries, pass for the true Worship of God. --- This would partly be true, if those were really the Words of Plutarch: But as not one Syllable of them is found there, what must we think of this Couple of Corrupters and Forgers? There is nothing in all this, but their own Disfigurations and Distortions of the Original; their own Mumpings, and beggarly Tones, while they pretend to speak in Plutarch's Voice. --- Plutarch having observed, that Superstition alone allows no Ease nor Intermission, even in Sleep; their Dreams, adds he, do as much torment them then, as their waking Thoughts did before; they seek for Expiations of those Visions
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Visions nocturnal; Charms, Sulfurations, Dippings in the Sea, Sittings all Day on the Ground.

"O Greeks, Inventors of Barbarian Ills,

whose Superstition has devised Rowlings in the Mire and in the Kennels, Dippings in the Sea, Grovelings and Throwings upon the Face, deformed Sittings on the Earth, absurd and uncouth Adorations.

This is a verbal Interpretation of that Place—and now I dare ask the Reader, if he has seen a more flagrant Instance of Unfaithfulness and Forgery, than this of our two Writers? Humiliation and Contrition, known Words in your English Liturgy, are to be traduced here under Plutarch's Name. Where do those and their other Phrases appear in the Original? or where do the Rites, he really speaks of, appear in your Form of Worship? who among you rowl themselves in Mire, or wallow in Kennels? a Ceremony fit only to be enjoined to such crackbrained and scandalous Writers o."

The remaining Part of this random Essay, is so completely vague and unintelligible, that although it be evidently de-
signed, as a continued Sneer at Christianity, 'tis impossible to pick so much as an Objection, or even an Idea out of it. 'Tis therefore below Criticism. To conclude; when I see the noble Writer debase himself in this strange Manner, exercising at once the lowest Derision, and inflicting the deadliest Wounds on Religion and Christianity; I must own, the Appearance he makes, calls up to my Imagination a Remark of his own, "That there cannot be a Sight more shocking and contemptible, than that of a Man acting at once the Part of a Merry-Andrew, and an Executioner." It may be necessary, finally, to obviate his Lordship's perpetual Sneer at the Mysteries of our Religion. These, when particular Topics fail him, are the standing Objects of his Raillery. To cite particular Passages of this Kind, were needless, because they are innumerable. The plain Implication of all his gross Banter, is, "That because in the Christian Dispensation, there are some things, which surpass human Comprehension, Christianity is therefore absurd and ridiculous." With Regard to this Cavil, therefore,
tis not my Intention to insist on proving the " Difference between Things being _above _ Reason and Things being _contrary _to Rea-
son; or that Propositions may be true, " though they are _above _our Reason, so " long as they are not _contrary _to it." Full enough has been said on this Subject, and by no body better than by the excellent Mr. Boyle. 'Tis a Question of more Importance to decide, " Why any thing _mystery _should be admitted into a Religion, " _revealed _for the _Use _of _Man?" And in Answer to this, we need only observe, that Revealed Religion being designed for Man's _Use, _its _essential _Doctrines are plain, _intelligible _to all, _accommodated _to the Nature and Faculties of the _human _Kind. But as this System not only reveals to us our _Duty, _but all _Motives _too which may induce us to practise it; so, in order to _inforce _these, and _convince _us of the _Truth _of their _divine _Original, it was necessary that a _History _of _Pro-
vidence, or God's _Dispensation, should be revealed along with them. Hence something _mysterious _must needs arise; unless you suppose Man _infinite _in _Knowledge. For as this System reveals to us several Particulars (so far as they stand connected with _Piety _and
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and Morals which relate to the Nature of God, the State of other, and superior Beings, the original Condition of Man, the Interposition of Providence for his Redemption, the Change of his Nature and Faculties, through the future Periods of his Existence; in all which Circumstances, his present Reach of Thought could give him no Information; 'tis evident, that in these Accounts, many Subjects must be touched upon, and other Systems of Being occasionally glanced at, the full Knowledge of which, must be far beyond his present Comprehension. Now so far as these Truths and Facts, though imperfectly revealed, have any Tendency to enlighten his Mind, as to the general Plan of Providence, or stand connected in any other Manner with Religion and Virtue, so as to encourage and promote them, they must surely be admitted as Circumstances of great Propriety and Use. Or even supposing some of them to be of none, yet if they stand so essentially connected with others which are, so that the one cannot be destroyed without the other; this very Circumstance of essential Union, effectually destroys every Objection against their being of divine Original.

There
There may be, likewise, and undoubtedly are, some few Mysteries of another Kind in the Mosaic Dispensation: Such, I mean, as may seem, to some Apprehensions, not so easily reconcilable to the moral Attributes of God: Of which Kind there are some too, in the Constitution of the natural World. Now here in Revelation, as in Nature, 'tis the Part of human Reason to acquiesce in this mysterious and unknown Part, from what is clear and known. Of this Kind, perhaps, is the Expulsion of the Canaanites under Joshua, which the noble Writer hath taken such Pains to vilify. He might with as much Reason insult the Creator, for the Admission of Storm, Famine, or Pestilence. For as in Nature, so in revealed Religion, we are not to judge of the whole Constitution or Dispensation of Things, from small and seeming Exceptions: On the contrary, 'tis the Part of Wisdom to determine concerning these seeming Exceptions from a full View of the whole Dispensation. If this evidently tend to Good, the unprejudiced Inquirer into Nature and Revelation attributes the Doubt and Dark-
nests, which may involve any particular Part, to his own Incapacity and Ignorance. And justly; for as the noble Writer hath told us on this very Occasion, "In an Infinity of Things thus relative, a Mind, which sees not infinitely, can see nothing fully.'"

Let us therefore, while as yet we see but as through a Glass and darkly, contemplate the Works of God with Reverence and Submission. Let us wait the happier Hour, when we shall know even as we are known: when we shall be raised to a more enlarged Comprehension of our Creator's immense Designs; and the whole intelligent Creation shall join, in confessing and adoring the unerring Rectitude of all his Dispensations.

SECTION VIII.

HITHERTO we have seen the noble Writer buffooning and disgracing Christianity, from a false Representation of its material Part: We shall now consider what he hath thrown out against the Composition, Style, and Manner of the sacred Scriptures;
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Essays; for on this too, he has thought it expedient to point his Raillery.

He tells us, in the ironical Tone, "that the scriptural Descriptions, Narrations, Expressions, and Phrases, are in themselves many Times exceedingly pleasant, entertaining, and facetious. — That our Saviour's Style, — his Parables, Similes, Comparisons, — his Exhortations to his Disciples, the Images under which he often couches his Morals and prudential Rules — carry with them a certain Festivity, Alacrity, and good Humour so remarkable, that I should look upon it as impossible not to be mov'd in a pleasant Manner at their Recital." To these general Cavils he hath added a Simile in another Miscellany, which, as is usual with all fanciful Writers, is to stand for an Argument. He says, "'Tis no otherwise in the grammatical Art of Characters, and painted Speech, than in the Art of Painting itself. I have seen, in certain Christian Churches, an antient Piece or two, affirmed, on the solemn Faith of priestly Tradition, to have been angelically and divinely wrought, by a supernatural Hand.
Hand and sacred Pencil. Had the Piece happen'd to be of a Hand like Raphael's, I could have found nothing certain to oppose to this Tradition. But having observed the whole Style and Manner of the pretended heavenly Workmanship to be so indifferent, as to vary in many Particulars from the Truth of Art, I presum'd within myself to beg Pardon of the Tradition, and assert confidently, that, if the Pencil had been Heaven-guided, it never could have been so lame in its Performance. This ingenious Conceit, in the subsequent Paragraph, he very clearly, tho' slyly, applies to the holy Scriptures.

'Tis the Province of Wit to form Comparisons; of Philosophy to detect their Weakness, when they are obtruded on us as a Test of Truth. On Examination therefore I will venture to say, the noble Writer's Parallel will be found highly irregular and defective.

For there is an essential Difference between Paintings and Writing, both in their End and Execution. Paintings, with Regard to their End, are Things of mere A-

"Mist. v. c. i."

B b 3 musement
musement and Taste: Consequently all their Value lies in the Exquisiteness of the Art, and the fine Hand of the Master. 'Tis likewise a Species of Art, that lies chiefly among the Few: The Bulk of Mankind (or in the noble Writer's more elegant Phrase, the mere Vulgar) being incapable, thro' a Want of Leisure, of gaining any Proficiency in this Taste; or of acquiring that curious Discernment in Ordonnance, Drawing, and Colouring, which is at once the Pride and Pleasure of the Virtuoso-Tribe.

But with respect to Language, the Affair is otherwise: It's Ends are various. From the four different Kinds of literary Composition, as explained above*, there must arise a correspondent Variety of Style, the Poetical, the Oratorical, the Historical, and Didactic. The First of these Kinds alone partakes of the Nature of Picture, and therefore can alone be properly compared with it; as they are both referr'd to the Imagination, for the End of Pleasure: The other three Species of Composition, tending chiefly to Utility, by the Means of Persuasion or Instruction, draw their prime Value from Plainness, Clearness, and Precision:

*See Essay i. § 3.
and Christianity.

From being adapted, not to the Taste of the fastidious Critic, but to the Capacities of these who are the intended Objects of Persuasion or Instruction. Here then the noble Writer's Parallel is essentially defective: Since it was the Intention of Providence, in the sacred Scriptures, to condescend to what his Lordship's Quality and refined Wisdom intitle him to disdain, even to instruct the mere Vulgar: Whereas the End of Painting, is only the Amusement of the Few.

In regard to the Execution, we shall find as wide a Difference. There is, in philosophical Strictness, but one unvary'd Language or Style in Painting; which is "such a Modification of Light or Colours as " may imitate whatever Objects we find in "Nature." This consists not in the Application of arbitrary Signs; but hath it's Foundation in the Senses and Reason of Mankind; and is therefore the same in every Age and Nation. But in the literary Style or Language, the Matter is far otherwise. For Language being the voluntary Application of arbitrary Signs, according to the Consent of different Men and Nations, there is no single uniform Model of Nature to be follow-
Essay following. Hence _Gracefulness_ or _Strength_ of Style, _Harmony_ or _Softness_, _copious Expression_, _terse Brevity_, or _contrasted Periods_, have by turns gained the Approbation of particular Countries. Now all these _supposed_ Beauties of Speech are _relative, local_, and _capricious_; and consequently unworthy the Imitation of a divine Artist; who, to fit the Speech he _ordains_, to the great _Work of universal Instruction_, would, we may reasonably suppose, strip it of every _local, peculiar_, and _grotesque_ Ornament; and convey it unaccompanied by all, but the more _universal_ Qualities common to every Tongue.

The noble Writer, then, might with some _Shew of Reason_ have objected to the _Style of Scripture_, had the Writers boasted it's _Elegance_, as _Mahomet_ did that of his _Koran_, and defy'd all his _Opposers_ to write any thing approaching it in this _Respect_. But the sacred Writers discover no _Design_ or _Desire_ of excelling as _fine_ Writers: On the contrary, St. _Paul_ says, "they came not with the Power of human "Speech," and gives a Reason for it which does Honour to his Mission,
and Christianity.

Tho' this Scrutiny alone might be sufficient to detect and discredit the Wantonness of the noble Writer's Comparison; yet it will further lead us to a full Disclosure of the Truth; by shewing that to be the peculiar Characteristic of the Scripture Composition, which hath ever held the first Rank among the Qualities of human Writings; I mean, that of unadorned Simplicity.

As much hath been said by many Writers on the Subject of Simplicity, with very little Precision; and particularly by the noble Writer, who seems to separate the simple Manner from the sublime, as if they were incompatible; and indeed in his own Compositions preposterously deserts the one, when ever he attempts the other: It may be necessary here to fix the Idea of a just Simplicity. This may be said to consist in Truth and Weight of Sentiment, cloathed in such Images and Style, as may most effectually convey it to the Reader's Mind." If any of these Circumstances be wanting; if the Sentiment be false or trifling, if the Images or Style be such as tend rather to fix the Attention on

1 Advice, Part ii. § 2.
2 See the Moralists, passim.
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Essay themselves, than on the Sentiment they are employed to convey, the just Simplicity is destroyed. This, as might be proved by a large Induction of Particulars, is the Circumstance in which the best Critics of Antiquity placed the supreme Excellence of Writing. And, in this Use of the Term, it appears, that not only the familiar, the narrative, the didactic, but the pathetic, and sublime Manner too, are so far from being inconsistent with Simplicity, that they are then only in their Perfection, when founded on it.

'Tis true indeed, that the sacred Records are, as the noble Writer calls them, "multifarious, and of different Characters, varying according to the Situation, Intention, and natural Capacity of the Writers." Yet amidst all this Variety of Manner, the reigning Quality of Simplicity is so uniform and conspicuous, that the boldest Enemy of Christianity will not be forward to hazard the Credit of his Taste, by calling it in Question.

If we examine them in this Light, we shall find, that, according to the Division made above, they consist of Four different Kinds, the poetic, oratorial, historical,
and Christianity. The poetic lies chiefly in the Book of Psalms, of Job, and several detached Passages in the Prophets, particularly of Isaiah. They contain many noble Efforts of unmixed Poetry or pure Imitation; yet these, being all centered in one Intention, that of extolling the Works, and celebrating the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of the Deity, do generally partake of the Character of Eloquence, being chiefly of the lyric Kind. In all these, the great Character of Simplicity is so strongly preeminent, that every Attempt to embellish them, by adding the supernumerary Decorations of Style in Translation, hath ever been found to weaken and debase them.

As to the oratorical or pathetic Parts, innumerable might be produced, equal if not superior to any recorded by prophane Antiquity. In these, the leading Character of Simplicity is no less remarkable. Our Saviour's Parables and Exhortations are generally admirable in this Quality: Filled with unfeigned Compassion for the Weakness and Miseries of Man, they breathe nothing but the purest Benevolence. St. Paul's last Conversation with his Friends
ESSAY at Ephesus, on his Departure for Jerusalem; his Discourse on the Resurrection and on Charity; his Reproofs, his Commendations, his Apologies, especially that before Agrippa, are wrote in the noblest Strain of Simplicity. And as a perfect Model of this Kind, we may give the Story of Joseph and his Brethren, which for Tenderness, true Pathos, and unmixed Simplicity, is beyond Compare superior to any thing that appears in ancient Story.

But as the most important Part of Scripture lies in the historical and preceptive Part; especially in the New Testament, whence chiefly our Idea of Duty must be drawn; so we find this uniform and simple Manner eminently prevailing throughout, in every Precept and Narration. The History is conveyed in that artless Strain which alone could adapt it to the Capacities of all Mankind; the Precepts delivered by our Saviour are drawn from the Principles of common Sense, improved by the most exalted Love of God and Man; and either expressed in clear and direct Terms, or couched under such Images and Allusions, as are everywhere to be found in Nature, such as are,
and Christianity. and must ever be universally known, and familiars to all Mankind; in which we may further observe, his Manner of teaching was greatly superior even to the noble Writer's justly applauded Socrates, who for the most part drew his Images and Allusions from the less known Arts and Manners of the City. Through all this Variety of striking Allusion and moral Precept, the Style ever continues the same, unadorned, simple, and, even by the noble Writer's own Confession, "vehement and majestic;" yet never drawing the Reader's Attention on itself, but on the divine Sentiments it conveys.

To this we may further add, that these several Kinds of Composition are mixed and united with such Propriety and Force, as is scarce to be equalled in any other Writings. The poetical Parts are heightened by the great Strokes of Eloquence and Precept; the pathetic, by the noblest Imagery, and justest Morals; and the preceptive is strengthen-

— See Newton on Daniel; — Mr. Jortin's Discourses; — Dr. Law's Life of Christ.
— Not indeed without Reason; since his Design was less extensive, as he aimed not at the Instruction of all Mankind, but of the more literate Part of his Fellow Citizens.

Misc. ii. c. 3.
On Revealed Religion

Essayed and enforced by all the Aids of Poetry, Eloquence, and Parable; calculated at once to engage the Imagination, to touch the Passions, and command the Reason of Man-kind.

'Tis true, this unadorned Simplicity so conspicuous in the Scripture Composition, hath often given Offence to puerile Critics. The noble Writer hath but revived the Objection; it was weakly urged by Celsus in the Infancy of the Christian Religion. At the Period when Letters revived in Europe, the florid Taste was so prevalent in Italy, under the Pontificate of Leo the Tenth, that the Composition of the Scriptures was on this Account held in general Contempt; and one of the fine Gentlemen in Literature, of those Days, is known to have declared, "that he dared not to read the Bible, lest it should endanger his Style." We may easily form a Judgment of the Taste of that Age from this one Circumstance, "that their most elaborate and celebrated Compositions were all wrote in a dead Language:" For thus they became mere Imitators, even to a

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1 Origen contra Cels. l. vii. 2 Cardinal Pietro Bembo.
and Christianity.

Degree of Servility. And 'tis sufficient for the Defenders of the Bible to observe, that along with it, every other great Model of ancient Writing fell into the same Disgrace at the above-mentioned Period; while the general Taste and Attention was turned from Weight of Sentiment, and Strength of Image and Expression, to the local and capricious Decorations of Style and Language. But the Reign of this false Taste was of short Duration; so that for a long Time past, the comparative Merit of ancient Writers hath been weighed in a juster Scale.

Now if we examine the Writers whose Composition hath stood the Test of Ages, and obtained that highest Honour, "the concurrent Approbation of distant Times and Nations," we shall find that the Character of Simplicity is the unvarying Circumstance which alone hath been able to gain this universal Homage from Mankind. Among the Greeks, whose Writers in general are of the simple Kind, the divinest Poet, the most commanding Orator, the finest Historian, and deepest Philosopher, are, above the rest, conspicuously eminent in this great Quality. The Roman Writers

1 Homer. 2 Demosthenes. 3 Xenophon. 4 Aristotle.
rise towards Perfection according to that Measure of true Simplicity which they mingle in their Works. Indeed they are all inferior to the Greek Models. But who will deny, that Lucretius, Horace, Virgil, Livy, Terence, Tully, are at once the simplest and best of Roman Writers? Unless we add the noble Annalift, who appeared in After-times; who, notwithstanding the political Turn of his Genius, which sometimes interferes, is admirable in this great Quality; and by it, far superior to his Contemporaries. 'Tis this one Circumstance that hath raised the venerable Dante, the Father of modern Poetry, above the succeeding Poets of his Country, who could never long maintain the local and temporary Honours bestowed upon them; but have fallen under that just Neglect, which Time will ever decree to those who desert a just Simplicity for the florid Colourings of Style, contrasted Phrases, affected Conceits, the mere Trappings of Composition, and Gothic Minutiae.

Even their most applauded Poet, the famed Torquato Tasso, runs so often into this little Manner, that nothing but the reigning false Taste of the Age in which he lived, if indeed even that, can plead his
and Christianity.

'Tis this hath given to Boileau the most lasting Wreath in France; to Shakespeare and Milton in England; especially to the last, whose Writings are more unmixed in this Respect; and who had formed himself entirely on the simple Model of the best Greek Writers, and the sacred Scriptures.

Excuse. The great Portuguese Genius, Camoens, to whose Lusiade Tasso hath been much obliged, was much less faulty in this Particular, tho' he and the Italian were nearly Contemporaries.

Mr. Dryden somewhere observes, "that Milton never sinks so far below himself, as when he falls on some Tract of Scripture." 'Tis equally true, that he never rises so far above himself, as when he falls on some Tract of Scripture. 'Tis easy to guess what was the Drift of Mr. Dryden's Remark. But the Observations made above (Essay i. § 3.) will easily reconcile these seeming Contradictions. When Milton adopts the poetical Parts of Scripture, he rises above himself: But by an injudicious Application of the historical or didactic Parts, he often falls indeed.

This naturally leads us to an Observation on Mr. Hume's Essay on Simplicity and Refinement in Writing. He hath attempted to fix a certain Union of these two Qualities, which, he says, constitutes the most perfect Form of Composition. It were to be wished he had given us some better Reasons in support of this Opinion, which itself seems to be a mere Refinement. The Progress of his Argument is remarkable. — He draws all his Instances from Poets; and having given some Examples of Poets, who are both simple and unpoeetical in the Extreme, he arbitrarily throws the Censure on the too great Degree of Simplicity, instead of fixing it where he ought, viz. on the too great
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As it appears from these Instances, that Simplicity is the only universal Characteristic of just Writing; so the superior Eminence of the sacred Scriptures in this prime Quality hath been generally acknowledged. One of the greatest Critics in Antiquity, himself conspicuous in the sublime and simple Manner, hath born this Testimony to the Writings of Moses and St. Paul. And by Parity of Reason we must conclude, that, had he been conversant with the other sacred Writers, his Taste and Candour would have allowed them the same Encomium.

Mixture of the historical, oratorial, or argumentative Species. In Proof of this, we need only allude the Examples of Homer, Pindar, and Callimachus, where Simplicity, and at the same time Sublimity and the true poetic Forms, are in their last Perfection. Thus all he proves is, "that a Poet ought not to be unpoetical." —Next he puts Virgil and Racine on a Level, as having attained the nearest to this imagined Union of Simplicity and Refinement. Here he obligeth us again to call his Taste in Question: For every Page of Racine is full of Turns, both of Phrase and Sentiment: Whereas we scarce meet with three Instances of this Kind in all Virgil's Writings. —He then gives us his Idea of Simplicity: "Those Compositions which have the Recom- mendation of Simplicity, have nothing surprizing in the Thought, when divested of that Elegance of Expression, and Harmony of Numbers, with which it is cloathed." —From these extraordinary Premises, we are naturally prepared to expect his Conclusion, "that Catullus and Parnel are his favourite Authors!"}

But
and Christianity.

But we need not have Recourse to Authority, for the Proof of the superior Weight and Dignity of the sacred Scriptures, in this great Quality. 'Tis evident to Demonstration from the following Circumstance. It hath been often observed, even by Writers of no mean Rank, that "the Scriptures suffer in their Credit by the Disadvantage of a literal Version, while other ancient Writings enjoy the Advantage of a free and embellished Translation." But in Reality these Gentlemen's Concern is ill placed and groundless. For the Truth is, "That most other Writings are indeed impaired by a literal Translation; whereas, giving only a due Regard to the Idioms of different Languages, the sacred Writings when literally translated, are then in their full Perfection." Now this is an internal Proof, that in all other Writings there is a Mixture of local, relative, exterior Ornament; which is often lost in the Transfusion from one Language to another. But the internal Beauties which depend not on the particular Construction of Tongues, no Change of Tongue can destroy. Hence the Bible-Composition preserves it's native Beauty and Strength, alike
alike in every Language, by the sole Energy of unadorned Phrase, natural Images, Weight of Sentiment, and great Simplicity.

'Tis in this Respect, like a rich Vein of Gold, which, under the severest Trials of Heat, Cold, and Moisture, retains its original Weight and Splendor, without either Loss or Alloy; while baser Metals are corrupted by Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and assimilated to the various Elements thro' which they pass.

This Circumstance then may be justly regarded as sufficient to vindicate the Composition of the sacred Scriptures; as it is at once their chief Excellence, and greatest Security. 'Tis their Excellence, as it renders them intelligible and useful to all; 'tis their Security, as it prevents their being disguised by the false and capricious Ornaments of vain or weak Translators.

We may safely appeal to Experience and Fact for the Confirmation of these Remarks on the superior Simplicity, Utility, and Excellence of the Style of holy Scripture. Is there any Book in the World, so perfectly adapted to all Capacities? that contains such sublime and exalting Precepts, convey'd in
in such an artless and intelligible Strain? that can be read with such Pleasure and Advantage, by the lettered Sage and the unlettered Peasant? To whom then would the noble Writer send Mankind for religious and moral Instruction? To the divine Plato, it may be supposed; or, more probably, to the inraptured Strains of Philocles and Theocles. And sure, Mankind must reap much Instruction and Advantage from the puffed Epitaphs and fusian Style of a philosophical Romance. We may reasonably hope indeed, soon to see (nay, do we not already see?) the happy Effects of this high Discipline. For in Fact, the noble Writer's Characteristics are now the standing Oracle in the Office, the Shop, nay, as I am informed, sometimes even in the Cobler's Stall. We need not wonder therefore, that in these new Habitations of Taste, sublimed Phrase, and abstruse Philosophy, the simple Strains of the Gospel are damned and discarded.

To return then to the noble Writer's Comparison, (if indeed we have departed from it) these united Observations may convince us, that the only Circumstance in Painting, which can with any Propriety be compared to literary Style, is that of Colouring.
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Essay Colouring. And on this Principle we may further confirm all that hath been said on the superior Excellence of the simple Manner. For 'tis well known, and the noble Writer knew it, that, while the Masters in this fine Art confined the Pencil to the genuine Forms of Grace and Greatness, and only superadded to these the temperate Embellishments of a chastised and modest Colouring, the Art grew towards its Perfection: But no sooner was their Attention turned from Truth, Simplicity, and Design, to the gaudy Decorations of a rich and luscious Colouring, than their Credit declined with their Art: And the experienced Eye, which contemplates the old Pictures with Admiration, surveys the modern with Indifference or Contempt.

To conclude. We see there are two Kinds of Composition, essentially opposed to each other. The one turns the Attention on itself; the other on the Truths it conveys. The first may be justly compared to a Sun-Beam playing on the Surface of the Water, which attracts and dazzles the Beholder's Eye by its own useless Splendor. The last is like a Sun-Beam darting to the Bottom; which, while itself is unseen, or unobserved,
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unobserved, communicates its Brightness, and
illumines every Object on which it falls.

How far the first of these may belong to
the noble Writer, let others determine.
'Tis sufficient to have proved, that the last
is the unvaried Style and Manner of the
sacred Scriptures.

SECTION IX.

IT would have been strange, had his Lordship emptied so much of his Gall on
Christianity, without bestowing a Share on its Ministers. It may therefore be ex-
pected, that something should be said on his Treatment of the English Clergy.

So far as his Spirit of Satire may have been provoked by the persecuting and into-
lerant Principles of some of the Clergy in his Time, 'tis highly commendable. It
matters not in what Rank, Order, or Profession, the Enemies of Freedom may ap-
pear. What Shape or Pretence soever they may assume, 'tis a Work of true Charity to
stigmatize and disgrace them, as the Enemies of Mankind.

But it appears too evidently, that the noble Writer's Spleen arose from another
Foundation. For his Satire is not so often
pointed against them, as being the Enemies of Freedom, as the Friends of Christianity. With a View of disgracing them in this Regard, he hath ridiculed and abused their Writings, their Preaching, and even their Persons. It will only be necessary to select a few Instances of this Kind, from an infinite Number; in all which, the Delicacy of the Raillery is so conspicuous, as to need no Illustration.

In his Soliloquy, he hath paid his Compliments to the Writings of the Clergy, under the Title of "Candidates for Authorship of the sanctify'd Kind." "These, he says, may be termed a sort of Pseudo-Ascetics, who can have no real Converse either with themselves or with Heaven." "And although the Books of this fort, by a common Idiom, are called good Books, the Authors for certain are a sorry Race." "A Saint-Author, of all Men least values Politeness."--He is above the Consideration of that, which, in a narrow Sense, we call Manners: Nor is he apt to examine any other Faults, than those which he calls Sins."

*Solil. Part i. § i.*
Thus he deals with the Clergy, when they are dull enough to write seriously on the most interesting Subjects. But if any of the Order happens to fall into a gayer Turn of Composition, the Charge is renewed under another Form. Then, "the burlesque Divinity grows mightily in vogue; and the cry’d up Answers to Heterodox Discourses are generally such as are written in Drollery—Joy to the Reverend Authors, who can afford to be thus gay, and condescend to correct us in this Lay-Wit."

Their Preaching is another standing Subject of Derision: And ridiculed they must be, whether they divide their Discourse, or divide it not. If the first, then the following Stroke of Raillery is prepar’d for them: "Come we now (as our authentic Rhetoricians express themselves) to our second Head." If the latter, then "our religious Pastors have changed their Manner of distributing to us their Spiritual Food --- they have run into the more savory way of learned Ragout and Medley. The elegant Court-Divine exhorts in Miscel-
lany, and is ashamed to bring his Two's and Three's before a fashionable Assembly.'"

The Defenders of Christianity are baited in their Turn. "For Example, let a zealous Divine and flaming Champion of our Faith, when inclined to shew himself in Print, make choice of some tremendous Mystery of Religion, opposed heretofore by some damnable Heresarch."

"A Ring is made, and Readers gather in Abundance. Every one takes Party and encourages his own Side." "This shall be my Champion!—This Man for my Money!—Well hit on our Side!—Again, a good Stroke!—There he was even with him!—Have at him next Bout!—Excellent Sport!"

The same familiar Elegance of Composition, joined with a surprising Effort in the noble Writer's own Sublime, runs through the following Paragraph; where he compares a Controversy in Divinity, to a Match at Foot-Ball. "So have I known a crafty Glazier, in time of Frost, procure a Foot-BALL, to draw into the Street the emulous Chiefs of the robust Youth."
and Christianity.

"Youth. The tumid Bladder bounds at every Kick, bursts the withstanding Casements, the Chaffys, Lanterns, and all the brittle vitreous Ware. The Noise of Blows and Out-cries fills the whole Neighbourhood; and the Ruins of Glass cover the stony Pavements: till the bloated battering Engine, subdued by Force of Foot and Fist, and yielding up its Breath at many a fatal Cran-ny, becomes lank and harmless, sinks in its Flight, and can no longer uphold the Spirit of the contending Parties."

Not content with these severe Strokes of Raillery, the noble Writer prepares a more deadly Blow at the Clergy; even no less than ruining their Fortunes among the Fair-Sex. And here the discerning Reader will readily guess, that his Ridicule must be needs levelled at their Persons. He introduces, or drags in, the Story of Othello and Desdemona; represents the one as a miraculous Story-teller, the other as a credulous Hearer. He then adds, "But why the Poet, amongst his Greek Names, should have chosen one which denoted the Lady superstitious, I can't imagine;"
Imagine; unless, as Poets are sometimes
Prophets too, he should figuratively, un-
der this dark Type, have represented to
us, that, about a hundred Years after his
Time, the Fair Sex of this Island should,
by other monstrous Tales, be so seduced, as
to turn their Favour chiefly on the Tale-
tellers; and change their natural Incli-
nation for fair, candid, and courteous
Knights, into a Passion for a mysterious
Race of black Inchanters b.

I cannot think this elegant Passage de-
serves a particular Reply. 'Tis supposed,
the noble Writer designed it only as a Proof,
That the Saint-Author of all Men least
values Politeness; as a Proof how inca-
pable he was of violating his own Rule, or
exercising any Degree of that gross sort of
Railery, which is so offensive in good Com-
pany c.

Indeed all the delicate Paragraphs here
cited are much of the same Nature; and
afford an undeniable Proof, how great a
Master his Lordship was, in the true re-
finéd Manner of Attic Wit. I shall only
add, that if, according to the Noble Wri-
ter's projected Scheme of Confutation, the

b Sol. Part. § 3.  
c Wit. and H. Part i. § 2.
English Clergy should ever be baited in the way of Puppet-show at Bart’l’mew-Fair; I would recommend the above Passages, with many parallel ones in the Characteristics, to the Managers of the Drama; as being admirably suited to the Genius of their wooden Drole, whether he should chuse to swagger in the Sock, or strut in the Buskin.

Were the Clergy disposed to return these Compliments in Kind, it may be questioned whether his Lordship’s Admirers would acquit them of coarse Manners. But however some of that Body may blindly hate, and others as blindly admire, the Author of the Characteristics; yet the best and wisest of the Profession, so far as I have been able to learn from their Conversation, would probably rather chuse to return his Salutations in the following Manner:

‘Notwithstanding the superior Airs of Contempt, which on all Occasions your Lordship is pleased to assume, we cannot think you of such Ability, as you seem to appear in your own Eyes: Neither can we think this overweening Opinion of yourself, this Disdain of all who adopt not your peculiar Tenets, is any Proof of real Wisdom, since yourself hath taught us
On Revelation Religion

III.

to believe, "that as we grow wiser, we shall prove less conceited." Though we scorn to revile you, yet we judge ourselves well intitled to tell you the Truth on every Subject. We regard, therefore, fine Imagination, an extensive Knowledge, and a commanding Judgment, as three Qualities independent on each other. In the first, we think you eminent; in the second, considerable; in the last, we must be excused, if we think you neither eminent nor considerable: And on this Account we can allot you no high Rank, in the Scale of true Genius. Suitable to this, your Taste in Arts is much superior to your Talents for Philosophy. The only Chain of Reasoning you have exhibited, is found in your Enquiry concerning Virtue: Nor is even this fastened to the Throne of Truth, but hangs trembling from a shadowy and aerial Fabric, blown up by a sportive Imagination. You have indeed obtained the Character of an original Writer in Philosophy: how little you deserve this must needs be known to all who are versed in the Greek Schools; for thence the rational Part of your System is chiefly drawn. What you borrow, you often embellish, some-
and Christianity.

sometimes disguise, never strengthen: but Sect.

when you attempt to become original, you only convince us how ill qualified you are for such a task. Accordingly, we find in the general turn of your writings, meagre sentiments studiously adorned by a glare of words, and a waste of imagery: with these you amuse the common reader; like the unqualified painter, who, unable to reach the beauties of a just and vigorous expression, covers a lifeless figure with gaudy draperies. And we cannot but think, that, had you studied the writings of that great and excellent man whom you so weakly deride, your volumes, whatever they had lost in bulk, would have gained in weight and splendor.

With regard to the buffoonries, which you have occasionally exercised on christi

stianity, in what you call "your random essays;" they are so much below the character of the philosopher, that it is matter of surprize to us, that you could think they can become the man of wit.

It is true, among those whom you most despise, the mere vulgar, they have gained you the character of an inimitable author;

Mr. Locke. See Advice, &c. Part iii. § 1.
among Readers of that Rank "who are ready to swallow any low Drollery or jest," among those whom you have elsewhere described, "who, while they pretend to such a Scrutiny of other Evidences, are the readiest to take the Evidence of the greatest Deceivers in the World, their own Passions." But whatever these passages may be in their Consequences, we cannot but think them, in their own Nature, even contemptible. For, to use your own Attic Phrase, "to twitch, snap, snub up, or banter, to torture Sentences and Phrases, and turn a few Expressions into Ridicule, is not sufficient to constitute what is properly esteemed a Writer." On this Account we look upon these boasted Passages in your Book, to be of that Kind which are calculated only "to create Diversion to those who look no further," and in which, as you elsewhere observe, "the most confused Head, if fraught with a little Invention, and provided with Common-Place-Book Learning, may exert itself to as much Advantage, as the most orderly and well-settled Judgment." We cannot therefore express any esteem.

*Mor. P. ii. § 1.  †Misc. v. c. 2.  ‡Misc. i. c. 1.  †† Ib.  ‡‡ Esteem
Esteem either for the Scurrilities of the Sect, coarse Jester, or the trim Delicacy and Self-Admiration of the literary Narcissus.

But, my Lord, there lies a heavier Charge against you, than that of bad Writing. We mean the Indecency and Immodesty of your Conduct, in your Manner of attacking Christianity. You would be thought a Lover of your Country; yet you pour Contempt upon its Laws and Institutions. You allow the Propriety of a religious Establishment; yet you take every Occasion to deride it. You contend for a public Leading in Religion; yet you perpetually insinuate, that Mankind are led by the Nose. You say, "The Public ought not to be insulted to its Face;" yet your Writings are one continued Insult upon its Opinions. Our excellent and unrivaled Constitution allows a perfect Freedom of Inquiry; had you then argued ingenuously and fairly against Christianity, without attempting Ridicule; whatever Opinion we might have entertained of your Head, we might at least have thought favourably of your Heart. But in direct Opposition to this Rule, you always ridicule, scarce ever
ever argue; you endeavour to instil illegal Opinions, without bringing any Evidence to support either their Usefulness or Truth: You give these crude Buffoonries to the World in Print; and is not this insulting the Public to its Face?---In this Instance, we must think you a bad Citizen; and to be ranked among those, whom a Writer, by no means prejudiced in Favour of Religion, thus justly stigmatizes: "Who I hardly know for what End, have written against the Religion of their Country, and without pretending to substitute any thing better, or more practicable, in its Place, would deprive us of our happy Establishment, merely, as it should seem, for the Pleasure of pulling down and doing Mischief." Besides this, my Lord, we must take the Liberty to say, that you betray such frequent Marks of Insincerity and designed Misrepresentation in your Treatment of Christianity, as but ill consisits with that Reverence which you owe to Truth and to yourself; such as becomes not a Man, much less a Man whom the Public Consent hath distinguished with the Title of Right Honourable.

Enquiry into Homer's Life and Writings, § 6.
and Christianity.

What your particular Motives may have been to this Treatment of Christianity, you best know. The most excusable Temptation to this strange Conduct, that we can assign, must have been the natural Prevalence of Spleen. For, as you observe, "all splenetic People have a necessary Propensity to Criticism and Satire." — "The Spirit of Satire rises with the ill Mood; and the chief Passion of Men thus diseased and thrown out of good Humour, is to find Fault, censure, unravel, confound, and leave nothing without Exception and Controversy."

Far be it from us to derogate from your private Virtues; tho' we cannot but wish, that in your Treatment of Christianity, you had given better Proofs of that universal Charity, which you so warmly profess; even while you are reviling that Religion where alone it is to be found.— There is another Circumstance, that sure the more humane Part of your Admirers would hesitate upon; we mean, that extreme Contempt you express for those you call the mere Vulgar. Your Regard seems solely centered in establishing your peculiar System among those you call "Men of

\[ \text{Misc. ii. c. 3.} \]

"Fashion"
Fashion and Breeding;" while you give up the Vulgar, that is (to speak with due Re-
verence of the Works of God) the Bulk of your Fellow-Creatures, as a proper Prey to the supposed Delusions and Tyranny of those, whom you brand as the Enemies of Mankind. How this Contempt for the greatest Part of your Species can consist with true Virtue or Charity, we are at a Loss to comprehend. 'Tis certain, Christianity would have taught you otherwise.
Nay, my Lord, a great Roman, as much your Superior in Station, as in Genius and active Virtue, would have told you, "that true Goodness extends itself to the Multitude; that Virtue is not disdainful or proud; but regards all Ranks of Men, and consults their Welfare; which it could not do, if it despised the Vulgar." Christianity hath nobly heightened this Principle; and recommends the Weak, the Poor, the Ignorant, as the proper Objects not only of our Charity, but Instruction.
And however mortifying it may be to proud Minds, we must say, that we frequently meet with Men in the lower Ranks of Life, sometimes even in Cities, often...
and Christianity. in Cottages, who when instructed in the Principles of true Christianity, are superior in Knowledge, Worth, and Happiness, to those who hold them in Contempt.

With regard to your Treatment of ourselves: It gives us no Concern. For in one Word, Calumnies thrown on whole Bodies of Men, are unmeaning and self-confuted. "You may therefore proceed in your Invectives; bestowing as free Language of that Kind, as your Charity and superior Breeding will permit. You may liberally deal your courtly Compliments and Salutations in what Dialect you think fit; since for our own Part, neither the Names of Bigots, Impostors, Pedants, Formalists, Gladiatorian Penmen, Flaming Champions of the Faith, Black Tribe, or Black Incanters *, will in the least scandalize us, while the Sentence comes only from the Enemies of our Master. On the contrary, we rather strive with ourselves to suppress whatever Vanity might naturally arise in us, from such Favour bestowed. For whatever may, in the Bottom, be intended us, by such a Treatment,

* Names bestowed on the English Clergy throughout the Characteristics.
On Revealed Religion

Essay III.

'tis impossible for us to term it other than Favour, since there are certain Enmities which it will be ever esteemed a real Honour to have merited.'

You have indeed wisely and artfully endeavoured to intimidate us from exposing the Folly of your Insults on Religion and Christianity; by representing such an Attempt as being in itself Contemptible.

For thus you are pleased to speak: "It must be owned, that when a Writer of any Kind is so considerable as to deserve the Labour and Pains of some shrewd Heads to refute him in Public, he may, in the Quality of an Author, be justly congratulated on that Occasion. 'Tis supposed necessarily, that he must have writ with some kind of Ability or Wit."'

To obviate this Remark, is the only further Trouble we shall give your Lordship on the present Occasion. And here, without any particular Application to yourself, we must beg Leave to offer the plain Reason why we think your Observation, however plausible and commonly received, is yet entirely groundless. Indeed, with regard to Writings of mere Speculation or Critico-

See Misc. v. c. 3. Misc. i. c. 2.
and Christianity.

Christianity, which affects not the Happiness of Mankind, "if Authors write ill they are despised" and forgotten. At least, as the Satirist observes, they ought to be so:

And on this Account, many Parts of the Characteristics will, probably, pass for ever uncensured by us.

But there are other Kinds of bad Writing, which will ever bid fair to live and be admired. We mean, such as minister to the low Passions and Vices of Mankind; among which, Ridicule on Religion is of all others the most favourite Topic. And even where these Affections do not prevail, the Generality of Men, thro' the Weakness of Nature, are easily misled in Matters even of the nearest Concernment, by Sophistry or Buffoonry; by a Hint, a Sarcasm, or an Allusion. Now in this Case, 'tis surely a proper and rational, tho' perhaps no easy Task, to detect Misrepresentation, and lead Mankind back again to the Paths of Truth and Happiness. For the Effects of Ridicule on the Mind, re-

Quel Demon vous irrite, et vous perte à medire?
Un Livre vous deplait : Qui vous force à le lire?
Laissez mourir un Fat dans son Obscurité.
Un Auteur ne peut-il mourir en Sérénité?

Boileau, Sat. ix.

semble
On Revealed Religion, etc.

Essay III.

Semblé those of Venom on the Body; which, tho' struck into the Blood by a puny Rep- tile, may yet demand, nay even baffle, the Power of the strongest Medicines. How then can you affirm that an Effect of this Kind "implies either Ability or Wit," if Buffoonry and Sophistry can do the Business? And that they may, we have your Lordship's full Acknowledgment; for, to adopt and conclude with your own Ex- pression, "In the same Manner as a Mal- licious Censure, craftily worded and pronounced with Assurance, is apt to pass with Mankind for shrewd Wit; so a virulent (or a visionary) Max- im, in bold Expressions, tho' without any Justness of Thought, is readily received for true Philosophy."

Moralists, P. ii. § 1.

FINIS.