

BROWN'S LECTURES ON ETHICS.*

If these Lectures deserve half the commendation which Dr. Chalmers has bestowed on them in his recommendatory preface, every one who desires the dissemination of pure moral views and sound literature, must be glad to see them detached from the body of Dr. Brown's Philosophical Works, and given to the world in the cheap and popular form which facilitates their entrance into the humblest library and the most obscure reading circle. Except to students of moral science, the Ethical Lectures of Dr. Brown, from being regarded as part and parcel of his investigations and views on Mental Philosophy, are comparatively little known; though, in point of fact, his inquiries and elucidations of what is by far the most important of all the sciences, are written in a style which need not have alarmed the reader, the most diffident of his own capacity to follow subtle trains of reasoning, or of nice analysis. No severe task is imposed on his untutored or untried power of following close and intricate processes of reasoning; while the practical details in Brown's code of moral duties and virtues, are written in as simple and popular a style as the details of Paley, though with a more flowing eloquence and much greater scope of vivid and poetical illustration. "When," to borrow the words of Dr. Chalmers, "he passes from the elementary questions in morals, to the description and detail of the particular virtues, he very much drops the analyst; and, instead of a laborious and severe scrutiny into first principles, sets before his readers the most beautiful sketches and representations of character." Dr. Chalmers alleges a farther reason or apology for this passing from the severely philosophical to the popular, which, though it could not have been contemplated by Dr. Brown, has incidentally fitted for the widest diffusion a body of Ethical Lectures, originally addressed to a limited number of students. The cause which has produced the happy effect we have noticed, is thus stated in the preface:—"Over and above the strict philosophy of the subject, there is in it a high practical importance, possessing in itself the most urgent claims on the attention of the Professor, [of Moral Philosophy,] and making it indeed an imperative duty that he should pass onward from the laws, whether of human erudition or thought, to the lessons and the obligations of human virtue. There was, besides, a great temptation—were it for nothing else than the relief and relaxation of his students, after the fatigue of those arduous speculations through which he had before conducted them—that he should regale both himself and them, by setting forth in perspective the grace and loveliness of those virtues the principle of which he had just been labouring to explore. Let us not wonder, then, that the philosophical *savant* should, on such occasions,

have become the rhetorician or the monitor; and, indeed, we should have held it an unpardonable defect, had he not felt the impulse to communicate of his own enthusiasm for the beautiful and the good, to the youth who sat before him. They who personally knew him will at once recognise, in some of the representations which are here given, a picture of that very gentleness and refinement by which himself was characterized. It is this mixture of the more popular and engaging with things of abstruser quality which, in our opinion, makes it so advisable that these Lectures should be given to the world in the form of a separate publication."

By the help of Dr. Chalmers we have, we think, made out our first position, namely, the adaptation of a work which might be imagined wholly given up to elementary and abstruse philosophical inquiries and views, to the dissemination of the knowledge of those principles of duty and conduct, the earnest investigation of which is the paramount duty and interest of every thinking being. Dr. Chalmers does not, indeed, affirm that the Ethical Lectures of Dr. Brown, any more than the writings of any other uninspired man, present either a perfect theory of virtue, or a perfect directory of conduct. Such a work still is, and he imagines must, in our present state, ever remain a desideratum. But even an approximation to a perfect text-book, or to one standard work upon Ethical Science, is no small achievement; and this is found by him in Brown's Lectures, when he describes them as "A body of sound principle, ably and eloquently advocated;" and "having an immeasurable superiority over all the merely *human* systems of Moral Philosophy, or those where the science is treated apart from revelation, which he is acquainted with." Particular proofs of this superiority we shall point out as the discussions arise upon which they bear.

There is another advantage which general readers may obtain from the perusal of these Lectures:—Either for the exposition or the refutation of particular theories and views, Dr. Brown has, with great clearness and perfect candour, stated the doctrines of every eminent philosopher, every founder of a school, ancient or modern, who has treated of the science of Ethics. From Epicurus and Zeno, to Paley, Hume, and Smith, he includes them all. Of the twenty-eight Lectures, seven are entirely devoted to this important branch of a course of Ethics. On this head, Dr. Chalmers remarks, after an assurance to Dr. Brown's philosophical admirers, that the "best and highest theologians" agree with him as to what is the primary fountain-head of morality,— "And there is another most important coincidence between the ethical views of Dr. Brown and what is conceived by the ablest expounders of

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Christian truth to be orthodox in theology. We esteem it to be one of his most successful achievements, the utter demolition which he has effected of the Selfish System of Morals; in which category is included the Moral Philosophy of Dr. Paley, as being but an enlargement of the Selfish System: the one, properly so called, making the essence of virtue to lie in the pursuit of our own good in time; and the other, still in the pursuit of our own good, but of our good in eternity. The principle which most avails him in the work of refutation, is that for which the world was first indebted to Bishop Butler, in one of his Fifteen Sermons, which, taken all in all, form a most invaluable repertory of sound ethical doctrine, whether as grounded on the lessons of strictly moral science, or on the admirable and original views presented by their author, of man's moral constitution."

But, once for all, we refer to the eloquent preface,—in which Dr. Chalmers gives a general view of the nature and value of the work,—and proceed to the grateful task of introducing to our readers what has hitherto been, in a great measure, "a sealed book," though it is one not only worthy of all acceptance, on the highest grounds, but one admirably adapted to the purpose for which it has been given to the public in its new shape.

The opening Lectures treat of the first principles of the science, or of "our notions of virtue," and embody Dr. Brown's own views of the origin of morality, obligation, merit. They also contain nearly all that is given in the work of the metaphysics of moral philosophy. But the chain of reasoning which unfolds the nature and source of our primary moral notions, whether of the excellence or delinquency of particular actions, must be followed link by link by those who would clearly see their way through the investigations which follow, and who would start fairly, by at once getting rid of prevailing misconceptions. This preliminary part, therefore, of Dr. Brown's treatise, we leave to the diligent and careful reader, giving merely an outline and example of his happy manner of illustrating and simplifying difficult questions. He is showing how the same action may affect us very differently in different conditions of feeling or circumstances, and says,—

The action may seem to us worthy of blame rather than of praise, or scarcely be worthy of praise at all, or worthy of still higher admiration; but the difference arises from the change of circumstances supposed, not from any necessary difference in the principle of our moral judgments. In this way, by imagining some other agent with different views, or in different circumstances, and in this way only, I conceive, we learn to consider actions separately from the particular agent, and to regard the morality of the one as distinct from the merit of the other; when, in truth, the action which we choose to denominate the same, is, as a moral object, completely different.

If we were present when any one, unacquainted with the nature of the different lenses of the optician, looked at any small animal through a magnifier, or a multiplier, in a piece of plain coloured glass, we should never think of blaming his sense of vision as imperfect, though he were seriously to believe that the animal at which he looked was much larger than it is, or was not one merely, but fifty, or was blue not white. If, however, we were to conceive others, or the same individual him-

self, to look at the same object without the medium interposed, and to form the same opinion, we should then unquestionably ascribe to their vision what we before ascribed to the mere lens interposed; and, if we conceived our own sight to be perfect, we could not but conceive theirs to be imperfect. It is precisely the same in that distinction of the virtue of an action as the virtue of the agent, which has produced so much confusion in the theory of morals. We conceive, in the one case, the moral vision of the agent with the lens interposed, in the other case without the lens; and we make in the one case an allowance which we cannot make in the other. But still I must repeat, that in making this very allowance, it is only on account of the difference of circumstances that we make it, and that we cannot justly extend the difference from the medium to the living principle on which moral vision depends.

The emotions, or rather "notions" of virtue, morality, obligation, merit, are traced by Dr. Brown to one simple condition of the mind, which is "a feeling of vivid approval of the frame of the mind of the agent, which arises on the contemplation of certain actions, and the capacity of which is as truly essential to our mental constitution as the capacity of sensation, memory, reason, or any of the other feelings of which the mind is susceptible." But we cannot more satisfactorily exhibit Dr. Brown's theory of "Moral Approbation" than in the words of the retrospect of his speculation on a doctrine on which he bases so much. He says,—

It may be of advantage, therefore, to take a short retrospect of our original speculation. In surveying either our own conduct, or the conduct of others, we do not regard the actions that come under our review as merely useful or hurtful, in the same manner as we regard inanimate things, or parts even of our living mental constitution, that are independent of our will. There is a peculiar set of emotions, to which the actions of voluntary agents in certain circumstances give rise, that are the source of our moral sentiments, or rather which are themselves our moral sentiments, when considered in reference to the actions that excite them. To these emotions we give the name of moral approbation or moral disapprobation; feelings that are of various degrees of vividness as the actions which we consider are various. The single principle on which these feelings depend, is the source of all our moral notions; one feeling of approbation, as variously regarded in time, being all which is truly meant when we speak of moral obligation, virtue, merit, that, in the works of ethical writers, are commonly treated as objects of distinct inquiry; and that, in consequence of the distinct inquiries to which they have led, and the vain attempts to discover essential differences where none truly exist, have occasioned so much confusion of thought and verbal tautology as to throw a sort of darkness on morality itself. Instead, then, of inquiring first, what it is which constitutes virtue, and then what it is which constitutes merit, and then what it is which constitutes our moral obligation to do what we have seen to be right and meritorious, we found that one inquiry alone was necessary—what actions excite in us, when contemplated, a certain vivid feeling—since this approving sentiment alone, in its various references, is all which we seek in these different verbal inquiries. If a particular action be meditated by us, and we feel, on considering it, that it is one of those which, if performed by us, will be followed in our own mind by the painful feeling of self-reproach, and in the minds of others by similar disapprobation; if a different action be meditated by us, and we feel that our performance of it would be followed in our own mind and the minds of others by an opposite emotion of approbation, this view of the moral emotions that are consequences of the actions is that which I consider as forming what is

termed moral obligation, the moral inducement which we feel to the performance of certain actions, or to abstinence from certain other actions. We are virtuous if we act in conformity with this view of moral obligation; we are vicious if we act in opposition to it; virtuous and vicious meaning nothing more than the intentional performance of actions that excite, when contemplated, the moral emotions. Our action, in the one case, we term morally right, in the other case morally wrong; right and wrong, like virtue and vice, being only words that express briefly the actions which are attended with the feeling of moral approbation in the one case, of moral disapprobation in the other case. When we speak of the merit of any one, or of his demerit, we do not suppose any thing to be added to the virtue or vice; we only express, in other words, the fact, that he has performed the action which it was virtuous or vicious to perform; the action which, as contemplated by us, excites our approval, or the emotion that is opposite to that of approval. Moral obligation, virtue, vice, right, wrong, merit, demerit, and whatever other words may be synonymous with these, all denote then, as you perceive, relations to one simple feeling of the mind; the distinctive sentiment of moral approbation or disapprobation, which arises on the contemplation of certain actions; and which seems itself to be various, only because the action of which we speak or think, meditated, willed, or already performed, is variously regarded by us, in time, as future, present, past. There are, in short, certain actions which cannot be contemplated without the instant feeling of approval, and which may therefore be denominated morally right. To feel this character of approvableness in an action which we have not yet performed, and are only meditating on it as future, is to feel the moral obligation or moral inducement to perform it. When we think of the action in the moment of volition, we term the voluntary performance of it virtue; when we think of the action as already performed, we denominate it merit; in all which cases, if we analyze our moral sentiment, we cannot fail to discern, that it is one constant feeling of moral approval, with which we have been impressed, that is varied only by the difference of the time at which we regard the action as future, immediate, or past.

A great part of the confusion which has prevailed in the theory of morals, has arisen, I have little doubt, from indistinctness of conception with respect to the identity or the difference of these moral notions of obligation, virtue, merit. . . . It is necessary for general peace, even though no other relation were to be considered, that there should be some great rules of conduct, according to which all may direct their actions in one harmonious course of virtue; or according to which, at least, in any partial discord of the actions of individuals, the moral sentiment of the community may be harmoniously directed, in checking what would be generally injurious, and furthering what would be generally beneficial. There is, therefore, we found, such an accordance of sentiment—of sentiment that is directed by the provident benevolence of God to the happiness of all who live in the great social communion of mankind, even when the individual, acting in conformity with the sentiment, has no thought beyond the sufferer whose anguish he relieves, or the friend to whose happiness he feels it more than happiness to contribute, or the preservation of his own internal character of moral excellence, in cases in which pain is encountered or pleasure sacrificed with no other object than that moral excellence itself. Since the world was created, there have indeed been myriads of human beings on the earth; but there has been only one God, and there is only one God. There is, therefore, only one great voice of approbation in all the myriads of mankind; because He, the great approver and the great former of our moral constitution, is one. We may refrain from virtue; we may persecute virtue; but, though our actions may be the actions of hatred, there is a silent reverence which no hatred can suppress. The omnipresent Judge of human actions speaks in the cause of the wicked as in the cause of the good, and has

made it impossible for us, even in the wildest abuses of our power, not to revere, at least in heart, the virtue which he has honoured with his love.

Dr. Chalmers censures Brown for not more explicitly assenting to the doctrine which Butler has named "The Supremacy of Conscience;" but here and in similar passages we find the fullest recognition of this doctrine.

In exposition of his own theory, it is said, in another place,—

All our moral sentiments, then, of obligation, virtue, merit, are in themselves, as we have seen, nothing more than one simple feeling, variously referred to actions, as future, present, or past. With the loss of the susceptibility of this one peculiar species of emotion, all practical morality would instantly cease: for, if the contemplation of actions excited in us no feeling of approval, no foresight, that, by omitting to perform them, we should regard ourselves, and others would regard us, with abhorrence or contempt, or at least with disapprobation, it would be absurd to suppose that there could be any moral obligation to perform certain actions and not to perform certain other actions, which seemed to us morally equal and indifferent.

This fragment would be yet more incomplete if we wholly omitted the practical conclusions which are drawn from the previous speculation. On this head it is remarked—

We have now, then, examined very fully the great question, as to the distinctions which we find man every where to have made of actions, as morally right or wrong; and I trust, for the sake of your happiness in life at least, as much as for the accuracy of your philosophy, that you are not inclined to withhold your logical assent from the doctrine of the moral distinction of vice and virtue; a doctrine which seems to me to have every character of truth as a faithful picture of the phenomena of the mind, and which it would therefore be as erroneous as it would be miserable to deny.

In an earlier stage of the investigation, when discussing the limitations to the universality and omnipotence of the great moral law of our nature, the soundness of the logic is, if possible, surpassed by the glow and charm of sentiment and the beauty of illustration with which the subject is invested. One of the limitations to the universality for which Brown contends, is the complex nature of certain actions, and their complex results. On this point, it is argued—

Such partial views, it is evident, may become the views of a whole nation, from the peculiar circumstances in which the nation may be placed as to other nations, or from peculiarity of general institutions. The legal permission of theft in Sparta, for example, may seem to us, with our pacific habits, and security of police, an exception to that moral principle of disapprobation for which I contend. But there can be no doubt that theft, as mere theft,—or, in other words, as a mere production of a certain quantity of evil by one individual to another individual,—if it never had been considered in relation to any political object, would in Sparta also have excited disapprobation, as with us. As a mode of inuring to habits of vigilance a warlike people, however, it might be considered in a very different light; the evil of the loss of property, though in itself an evil to the individual, even in a country in which differences of property were so slight, being nothing in this estimate when compared with the more important national accession of military virtue. And, indeed, the reason of the permission seems to be sufficiently marked, in the limitation of the impunity to cases in which the aggressor escaped detection at the time. The law of nature, the law written in the heart of man, then came again into

all its authority; or rather, the law of nature had not ceased to have authority, even in those permissions which seemed to be directly opposed to it; the great object, even of those anomalous permissions, being the happiness of the state, the pursuit of which nature points out to our approbation in the same manner, though not with such vivid feelings, as she points out to us for approbation the endeavour to render more happy the individuals around us. It would be a very interesting inquiry to consider, in this way, all those instances which have been adduced as exceptions to natural law, and to detect the circumstances of real or supposed good accompanying the evil permitted, for which the evil itself might in many cases seem to have been permitted.

After following out this reasoning somewhat farther, it is convincingly argued of the limitations or exceptions to the universal law,—

When these supposed exceptions are tolerated, why is it that they are tolerated? Is it on account of the benefit or of the injury that co-exists in one complex mixture? Is it said, for example, by the ancient defenders of suicide, that it is to be commended because it deprives mankind of the further aid of one who might still be useful to society, or because it will give sorrow to every relation and friend, or because it is a desertion of the charge which Heaven has assigned to us? It is for reasons very different that it is said by them to be allowable; because the circumstances, they say, are such as seem of themselves to point out that the Divine Being has no longer occasion for our service on earth, and because our longer life would be only still greater grief or disgrace to our friends, and a burden rather than an aid to society. When the usages of a country allow the exposure of infants, is it not still for some reason of advantage to the community, falsely supposed to require it, that the permission is given? Or is it for the mere pleasure of depriving the individual infant of life, and of adding a few more sufferings to the general sufferings of humanity? Where is the land that says, Let misery be produced or increased, because it is misery? Let the production of happiness to an individual be avoided, because it is happiness? Then, indeed, might the distinctions of morality in the emotions which attend the production of good and evil, be allowed to be wholly accidental. But if nature has every where made the production of good desirable for itself, and the production of evil desirable, when it is desired and approved, only because it is accompanied, or supposed to be accompanied, with good, the very desire of the compound of good and evil, on this account, is itself a proof, not of love of evil, but of love of good. It is pleasing thus to find nature, in the wildest excesses of savage ignorance, and in those abuses to which the imperfect knowledge even of civilized nations sometimes gives rise, still vindicating, as it were, her own excellence,—in the midst of vice and misery asserting still those sacred principles which are the virtue and the happiness of nations—principles of which that very misery and vice attest the power, whether in the errors of multitudes who have sought evil for some supposed good, or in the guilt of individuals, who, in abandoning virtue, still offer to it an allegiance which it is impossible for them to withhold in the homage of their remorse.

The philosopher again returns to his fundamental doctrine of "approvableness," illustrating its modifications thus simply and felicitously—

In complicated cases, then, we may approve differently, because we are in truth incapable of distinguishing all the moral elements of the action, and may fix our attention on some of these, to the exclusion of others. Our taste, in like manner, distinguishes what is sweet and what is bitter, when these are simply presented to us; and there are substances which are no sooner put in the little mouth of the infant than he seems to feel from them pleasure or pain. He distin-

guishes the sweet from the bitter, as he distinguishes them in after life. Who is there who denies that this is, in the original sensibility of the infant, a tendency to certain preferences of this kind; that there are substances which are naturally agreeable to the taste, and substances which are naturally disagreeable, and that it requires no process of education, no labour of years, no addition of prejudice after prejudice, to make an object of desire to the child, and wormwood and disgust? Yet in the luxury of other years, there are culinary preparations which the taste of some approves while the taste of others rejects them; and in all which it is difficult to distinguish the prevailing element whether acid, austere, sweet, bitter, aromatic. If the morals of nations differed half as much as the customs of different nations, we might allow some cause of disbelief of all the natural distinctions of right and wrong. But what sceptic is there who contends that the approbation which one nation gives to a sauce or ragout, which almost sickens him, that the sweet does not naturally differ from the bitter, as more agreeable than the aromatic from the insipid; and that, to the taste of sugar, wormwood, spice, are, as sources of pleasure, essentially the same?

The manner in which the influence of association widely and powerfully limits our moral estimates of particular actions, is stated with peculiar clearness and force; but, as we can neither quote the whole of the Lectures, nor yet neglect all their beauties, we must, on this head, be brief; and the illustration which we copy out will sufficiently explain its own object.

It is quite evident, for example, that, in a civilized country, in which property is largely possessed, and complicated in its tenure, and as in the various modes in which it may be transferred, the infringement of property must be an object of peculiar importance, and what is essentially termed justice, in regard to it, is a virtue of essential value, and injustice a crime against which it is necessary to prepare many checks, and which is thence regarded as of no slight delinquency; the offence of the transgressor is estimated, in such a case, not by the little evil which, in any particular case, he may intentionally have occasioned to another individual, but in a great degree also by the amount of evil which would arise in a system of society constituted as that of the great nations of Europe is constituted, if all men were to be equally regardless of the right of property in others. When we read, therefore, of the tendency to theft, in many barbarous islanders of whom navigators tell us, and of the very little shame which they seem to feel on detection of their petty larcenies, we carry along with us our own classes of actions, and the emotions to which our own general rules, resulting from our own complicated social state, have given rise. We forget, that to those who consider an action simply as it is, the guilt of an action is an object that is measured by the mere amount of evil intentionally produced in the particular case; and that the theft which they contemplate is not, therefore, in its moral aspect, the same offence that is contemplated by us.

The same actions may be approved and disapproved in different ages and countries, from the greater importance attached to the good or to the evil of such compound results, in relation to the general circumstances of society, or the influence perhaps of political errors, as to the consequences of advantage or injury to society of these particular actions; and, in the same age, and the same country, different individuals may regard the same action with very different moral feelings, from the higher attention paid to certain partial results of it, and the different presumptions thence formed as to the benevolent or injurious intentions of the agent. All this, it is evident, might take place without the slightest mutability of the principle of moral sentiments.

The reasons for this we cannot state at length, nor yet those which prove that, with all the limi-

tations which are recognised, the denier of moral distinctions, the asserter of the original indifference of all actions, takes untenable ground. We cannot, however, forbear, though regretting the necessary mutilation, to give some specimens of the eloquent exposition of the universality and supremacy of the original law written in the heart of all men, which teaches them to distinguish good from evil; to approve of virtue and disapprove of vice. On this point it is remarked, in refuting those who deny original moral distinctions in actions, or rather in contending for what Dr. Chalmers thinks Brown should have more distinctly recognised as the Moral Sense,—

We can imagine vessels sent on voyages of benevolence, to diffuse over the world the blessings of a pure religion, we can imagine voyages of this kind to diffuse the improvements of our sciences and arts. But what should we think of a voyage, of which the sole object was to teach the world that all actions are not, in the moral sense of the term, absolutely indifferent, and that those who intentionally do good to the society to which they belong, or to any individual of that society, ought to be objects of greater regard than he whose life has been occupied in plans to injure the society in general, or at least as many individuals of it as his power could reach? What shore is there at which such a vessel could arrive, however barren the soil, and savage the inhabitants, where these simple doctrines, which it came to diffuse, could be regarded as giving any instruction? The half-naked animal, that has no hut in which to shelter himself, no provision beyond the precarious chase of the day, whose language of numeration does not extend beyond three or four, and who knows God only as something which produces thunder and the whirlwind, even this miserable creature, at least as ignorant as he is helpless, would turn away from his civilized instructors with contempt, as if he had not heard any thing of which he was not equally aware before. The vessel which carried out these simple primary essential truths of morals might return as it went. It could not make a single convert, because there would not have been one who had any doubts to be removed. If, indeed, instead of teaching these truths, the voyagers had endeavoured to teach the natives whom they visited the opposite doctrine, as to the absolute moral indifference of actions, there could then be little doubt that they might have taught something new, whatever doubt there might justly be as to the number of the converts.

Having further illustrated this position by beautiful classical examples and quotations from an eloquent modern writer, our author proceeds—

There is, indeed, to borrow Cicero's noble description, one true and original law, conformable to reason and to nature, diffused over all, invariable, eternal, which calls to the fulfilment of duty and to abstinence from injustice, and which calls with that irresistible voice which is felt in all its authority wherever it is heard. This law cannot be abolished or curtailed, nor affected in its sanctions by any law of man. A whole senate, a whole people, cannot dispense from its paramount obligation. It requires no commentator to render it distinctly intelligible, nor is it different at Rome, at Athens, now, and in the ages before and after; but in all ages, and in all nations, it is, and has been, and will be, one and everlasting: one as that God, its great author and promulgator, who is the common Sovereign of all mankind, is himself one. Man is truly man, as he yields to this divine influence. He cannot resist it, but by flying as it were from his own bosom, and laying aside the general feelings of humanity; by which very act he must already have inflicted on himself the severest of punishments, even though he were to avoid whatever is usually accounted punishment.

I have already alluded to the strength of the evidence which is borne by the guilty, to the truth of those distinctions which they have dared to disregard. If there be any one who has an interest in gathering every argument which even sophistry can suggest, to prove that virtue is nothing, and who will strive to yield himself readily to this consolatory persuasion, it is surely the criminal who trembles beneath a weight of memory which he cannot shake off. Yet even he who feels the power of virtue only in the torture which it inflicts, does still feel this power, and feels it with at least as strong conviction of its reality, as those to whom it is every moment diffusing pleasure, and who might be considered perhaps as not very rigid questioners of an illusion which they felt to be delightful. The spectral forms of superstition have indeed vanished; but there is one spectre which will continue to haunt the mind, as long as the mind itself is capable of guilt, and has exerted this dreadful capacity—the spectre of a guilty life, which does not haunt only the darkness of a few hours of night, but comes in fearful visitation, whenever the mind has no other object before it that can engage every thought, in the most splendid scenes and in the brightest hours of day. What enchanter is there who can come to the relief of a sufferer of this class, and put the terrifying spectre to flight? We may say to the murderer, that, in poisoning his friend, to succeed a little sooner to the estate which he knew that his friendship had bequeathed to him, he had done a deed as meritorious in itself, as if he had saved the life of his friend at the risk of his own; and that all for which there was any reason to upbraid himself was, that he had suffered his benefactor to remain so many years in the possession of means of enjoyment, which a few grains of opium or arsenic might have transferred sooner to him. We may strive to make him laugh at the absurdity of the scene, when, on the very bed of death, that hand which had often pressed his with kindness before, seemed to press again with delight the very hand which had mixed and presented the potion. But though we may smile, if we can smile, at such a scene as this, and point out the incongruity with as much ingenious pleasantry as if we were describing some ludicrous mistake, there will be no laughter on that face from which we strive to force a smile. He who felt the grasp of that hand will feel it still, and will shudder at our description; and shudder still more at the tone of joocular merriment with which we describe what is to him so dreadful.

What, then, is that theory of the *moral indifference* of actions which is evidently so powerless, of which even he who professes to regard it as sound philosophy, feels the impotence as much as other men; when he loves the virtuous and hates the guilty, when he looks back with pleasure on some generous action, or with shame and horror on actions of a different kind, which his own sound philosophy would teach him to be, in every thing that relates to his own internal feelings, exclusively of the errors and prejudices of education, equal and indifferent?

We cannot further follow an argument enforced by so much glow of sentiment and beauty of language—which establishes the grateful and ennobling doctrine, a doctrine as consonant with revelation as with reason—of the primary distinctions of morality being implanted in every human heart, never to be completely eradicated.

Having given so much of our space to what we may call Brown's system of ethical science,—which Dr. Chalmers states to be generally coincident with that of Bishop Butler, as unfolded in his "Sermons," affirming that the works of both are peculiarly fitted to be "the accompaniments, and, in some instances, the correctives of each other,"—we must be much more brief with our author's examination and refutation of the theories of the

most eminent of his predecessors in ethical inquiries. The first of them is Mandeville, whose theory is described in few words.

That man, like all other animals, is naturally solicitous only of his personal gratification, without regard to the happiness or misery of others; that the great point, with the original lawgivers or tamers of these human animals, was to obtain from them the sacrifice of individual gratification, for the greater happiness of others; that this sacrifice, however, could not be expected from creatures that cared only for themselves, unless a full equivalent were offered for the enjoyment sacrificed; that as this, at least in the greater number of cases, could not be found in objects of sensual gratification, or in the means of obtaining sensual gratification which are given in exchange in common purchases, it was necessary to have recourse to some other appetite of man; that the natural appetite of man for praise readily presented itself, for this useful end, and that, by flattering him into the belief that he would be counted nobler for the sacrifices which he might make, he was led, accordingly, to purchase this praise by a fair barter of that, which, though he valued it much, and would not have parted with it but for some equivalent or greater gain, he still valued less than the praise which he was to acquire; that the moral virtues, therefore, to use his strong expression, are "the political offspring which flattery beget upon pride;" and that, when we think that we see virtue, we see only the indulgence of some frailty, or the expectation of some praise.

Such is the very licentious system as to moral virtue, of this satirist of man; whose doctrine, false as it is, as a general view of human nature, has, in the world, so many instances which seem to correspond with it, that a superficial observer, who is little accustomed to make distinctions, extends readily to all mankind, what is true only of a part.

The hypothesis of Mandeville is then exposed at some length ere it is remarked—

If it be easy to make a little system like that of Mandeville, which reduces all virtue to the love of praise, it is just as easy to reverse the system, and to make all love of praise a modification of the purest virtue. . . . A slight extension of the system of Mandeville produces that general selfish system of morals which reduces all virtue to the desire of the individual good of the agent.

The hypotheses of Clarke and Wollaston are more summarily disposed of. Of the system of the first, or of both, it is said,—

The system of Dr. Clarke, therefore, if stripped of its pompous phraseology, and translated into common language, is nothing more than the very simple truism or tautology, that to act virtuously is to act in conformity with virtue.

From this doctrine of conformity to the fitness of things, the theory of Wollaston, in which virtue is represented to consist in the conformity of our actions to the true nature of things, scarcely differs, as I have said, in any respect, unless as being a little more circuitous and complicated. The truth of which Wollaston speaks, is only virtue under another name; and if we had no previous notions of moral good and evil,—no love of the happiness of others more than of their misery, it would be absolutely impossible to determine whether virtue or vice were truth or falsehood, even in the sense in which he uses these terms.

A singular sort of commendation is bestowed upon the treatise of Wollaston, when it is stated to be—

More valuable for the light which it indirectly throws on the nature of the prejudices that pervert our judgment, than for the truths which it contains in itself. If I were desirous of convincing any one of the influence of a system in producing, in the mind of its author, a

ready acquiescence in errors the most absurd, and in explanations far more necessary to be explained than the very difficulties which they professed to remove or illustrate, I know no work which I could put into his hands better suited for this purpose than the Religion of Nature Delineated.

In confuting the system of Hume, the Utilitarian System, of which Hume was the father and type, a more arduous task is undertaken. Dr. Chalmers describes the reasoning of this part of Brown's work, as "singularly able and conclusive, against the system of utility." With the argument we shall not intermeddle, as it will bear neither abridgment nor mutilation. Every separate step must be followed; but we may cull some specimens of those eloquent and graceful illustrations which have much of the force of argument. Dr. Brown is proving, that if utility be our standard, and the actuating principle of our moral actions, it is one of which the agent is himself unconscious.

Does the mother, (it is asked,) when she hangs sleepless, night after night, over the cradle of her sick infant, think even for a single moment, that it is for the good of the society of mankind, that she should labour to preserve that little being which is so dear to her for itself, and the abandonment of which, though no other being in the universe were to be affected by it, would seem to her a crime of scarcely conceivable atrocity? and are we to refuse to her patience and tenderness, and watchfulness of regard, the name of virtue, because she has thought only of some little comfort that might possibly flow to the individual, and has not measured her own personal sacrifices with that general good to which they should have been exactly adapted, nor estimated the general advantage of maternal love, as a principle of conduct which operates, and is continually to operate, in all the families of mankind? When we enter some wretched hovel, and see that wretchedness, which is so much more dreadful to the eye of him who beholds it, than to the ear of him who is told, in his splendid apartment, that there is misery upon the earth,—and who thinks that in pitying it, with the very idleness of pity, he has felt as a good man should feel; when we look through the darkness, to which there is no sunshine, on some corner darker still, where the father of those who have strength only to hang over him and weep, is giving to them his last blessing, which is all that remains to him to give; do we feel, on looking at this mixture of death, and sickness, and despair, and want, in dreadful assemblage, that it would be well for the world if a little relief were given to miseries so hopeless; or that compassion, as a principle of conduct, is of the highest usefulness, where there are so many sufferers on the earth, who may be objects of compassion? Of the principle of the action, in its relation to general utility, we never think. We hasten to do what it is in our power to do; and we have already obtained looks of as much gratitude, as could be felt in a moment of such affliction, long before we have thought of any thing more than what was before our very eyes. . . .

But the feelings of the agent himself, whom alone we have yet considered, it may perhaps be said, furnish no decisive confutation of the supposed moral measurement of the virtue of actions, by the feeling of their precise degrees of general utility.

It is questioned whether the utilitarian philosopher in all cases pauses to estimate particular actions by their advantage to the community; and affirmed that such an idea never occurs to the multitude, whose moral feelings are at least as vivid as those of the philosopher who can calculate the most remote consequences of actions. A portion of the reasoning here will, we think, bear to be detached, without greatly suffering.

Let the feelings of the agent be left wholly out of account, and let us think only of the feelings of him who contemplates the action of another. Is the approbation of virtue, in this case, the feeling of mere utility? our indignation, disgust, abhorrence of vice, in its aspects of greatest atrocity, a feeling of nothing more than of the uselessness, or physical encumbrance and detriment to society, of that profitless thing which we call a tyrant or a parricide! The doctrine of utility, as the felt essence of virtue, is in this case as little in agreement with the moral facts which it would explain, as in the case of the feelings of the agent himself; as little accordant with them as any false hypothesis in mere physics, with the stubbornly resisting physical facts, which it would vainly endeavour to reconcile, or at least to force together.

If the approbation which we give to virtue be only the emotion excited in us by the contemplation of what is useful to mankind, it is very evident that such utility is to be found, not in the actions only of voluntary agents, and in the general principles of conduct from which the particular actions flow, but in inanimate matter also; and indeed, on earth at least, it is only by the intervention of matter that one mind can indirectly be of any utility whatever to any other mind. Let us imagine, then, not a mere chest of drawers before us,—for that may be counted of too trifling convenience,—but the most useful machine which the art of man has been able to devise,—a loom, for example, a ship, a printing-press, instruments which have certainly contributed to the happiness of the world a far greater amount of good than any moral action of any generous benefactor, whose voluntary production of a little limited good, perhaps to a single individual only, may yet have excited in us the liveliest emotions of a regard that is almost veneration, or more than mere veneration. When we think of any one of these noble instruments, as placed before our eyes, or when any one of them is actually before our eyes, and when we trace all the contrivances of its parts, and think of the good which has for many ages resulted, and will still continue to result from the whole, does it seem to us possible that any one should assert, or almost that any one should imagine, for a moment, the sameness in kind of the intellectual admiration, if I may so express it, which we feel in such a case, with the moral admiration that is excited in us by the patriot or the martyr; or even by the humblest of those who, in their little sphere of private life, in the ordinary circumstances of peaceful society, exert, for the good of the few who are around them, an energy of active benevolence, as powerful as that which, in a more elevated station, and in a tumultuous age, ennobles the leader and the sufferer in the cause of nations and of the world? Our admiration of a steam-engine, our admiration of an heroic sacrifice of personal comfort, or of life itself, are feelings that can scarcely be said to have any greater resemblance than the brightness of scarlet and the shrillness of a trumpet; and the blind man who asserted the similarity of these two sensations, was, I cannot but think, (if our consciousness is to decide on the comparative merit of the theories,) at least as sound a theorist as he who would convince us of the similarity of the two emotions. Indeed, if we were to strive to conceive all the possibilities of extravagant assertion, it would not be easy to imagine one less warranted by fact, than that which would affirm that we love a benefactor exactly with the same feelings as those with which we regard a house or a loaf of bread; or at least that there is no difference, but as one or the other may have been in degree more or less to us or to the world in general.

If, indeed, mere matter could, by the most beautiful subserviency to our happiness, become a reasonable object of moral admiration, by what means have we been able to escape an universal idolatry? How is it that we are not, at this moment, all adorers of that earth on which we dwell, or of that great luminary which renders our earth not habitable merely, but delightful! The ancient worshippers of the universe at least supposed it to be animated with a soul. It was

the soul of the world which they adored. The savage, who trembles at the thunder, and bends before the whirlwind that knee which does not bow to man, believes that there is some being greater than man who presides over the awful darkness. But, according to the system of utility, the belief of a soul of the world, or of a ruler of the lightning and the storm, which even the savage thinks necessary, before he deign to worship, is superfluous for our more philosophic veneration.

A benevolent man and a steam-engine may both be instrumental to the happiness of society; and the quantity of happiness produced by the unconscious machine may be greater, perhaps, than that produced by the living agent; but there is no imaginary increase or diminution of the utility of the one and of the other, that can make the feelings with which we view them shadow into each other, or correspond in any point of the scale.

Of all the virtuous actions which are performed at any one moment on the earth, from the slightest reciprocation of domestic courtesies, to the most generous sacrifices of heroic friendship, there is perhaps scarcely one, in which this thought of the supposed scale of utility, according to which his action is to be measured, is present to the mind of the agent, and is the influencing circumstance in his choice, the immediate motive which confers on his conduct the character of virtue. He is useful to the world, indeed, when he relieves the sufferings even of a single individual being. But he relieves that suffering, not because the world, if he gives the relief, will, as a whole, have less misery; or because it would be for the advantage of the world that others should imitate him in similar cases; but that the individual before him may have less misery: or, if he think of any thing but that particular misery and its relief, he thinks only of the manner in which he would appear to himself, if he were to abstain from giving the relief which is in his power. He bears sufferings of his own, in like manner, without lamentation; not because a single groan from him, in any case of bodily anguish, would increase the misery of the world, or lessen its happiness, but because a single groan, though it might leave the happiness of the world precisely the same as before, would degrade him in his own estimation.

Who is there, that, in the contemplation of Thermopylæ, and of the virtues that have made that desolate spot for ever sacred to us, can think of Leonidas and his little band, without any emotion of reverence, till the thought occur, how useful it must be to nations to have defenders so intrepid! Our admiration is not so tardy a calculator. It is instant in all its fervour; and when we begin to think of the exact point in the scale of utility at which the action may be ranked, this very thought is itself a proof that our emotion has already become less vivid. The question, indeed, is one which our consciousness may decide in a moment, if we only trust to the evidence of our consciousness; a sort of trust which, simple as it may seem, is no slight intellectual effort, when our consciousness is opposed to errors that are brilliant, and that have the authority of any great name. Our consciousness, if we appeal to it, will tell us, that to admire what is useful, and to revere what is virtuous, are feelings as different as any two feelings which are not absolutely opposite; and that, if we class them as the same, we may, with as much reason, class as the same, and reduce under a single term, our moral veneration and our sensation of fragrance, because they are both pleasing; or our admiration of what is useful, and our notion of a circle, because they are both states or feelings of the mind. Who ever looked on his conscience precisely in the same manner as he looked upon his estate; and felt not regret merely, but all the agonies of remorse, because his acres were less productive than the richer fields of his neighbour? We may respect the inventor of a machine, but we certainly do not respect the machine itself; though it is only in reference to the instruments which he invents that the inventor, as an inventor, has any utility; and, even in respecting his intellectual talents as an inventor, though he may have contributed more by this one exercise of

them, to the permanent happiness of the world, than all the virtues of all the multitude that existed around him at the time, do we feel for his new and beautiful application of the physical powers, the moral emotion which we feel for the humblest of those virtues? It is enough, as I have said, to appeal to your consciousness on this point.

But it would be vain to attempt giving any adequate notion of this part of Brown's work. It is enough that he is the most formidable opponent which the system of hard naked utility has yet had to encounter.

The selfish theory of moral science, as one much less plausible, did not require the same elaborate examination. Its demolition is more easily effected, and more effectually. Of the Selfish System it is remarked,—

Even if virtue were as selfish as it is most strangely said to be, I may observe, that it would be necessary to form two divisions of selfish actions: one, of those selfish actions in which self was the direct object; and another, of those very different selfish actions, in which the selfish gratification was sought in the good of others. He who submitted to poverty, to ignominy, to death, for the sake of one who had been his friend and benefactor, would be still a very different being, and ought surely, therefore, to be classed still differently from him who robbed his friend of the scanty relics of a fortune which his credulous benevolence had before divided with him; and, not content with this additional plunder, calumniated perhaps the very kindness which had snatched him from ruin.

The foreigner of whom Dr. Franklin speaks, who, on seeing the tragedy of Othello, conceived that all the emotion which the actor exhibited was for the loss of a handkerchief, did indeed form a theory as just as that of many very ingenious philosophers, when they would labour to convince us, that a little personal gratification was the only object of those who, in the dreadful ages of Roman tyranny, followed their friend into exile or imprisonment; or who, after he had nobly perished, still dared to proclaim that innocence, the very assertion of which was a crime, which the tyrant, who knew only how to pardon what was atrocious, and not what was virtuous, was, by the habits which he had wrought into the dreadful constitution of his nature, incapable of forgiving.

The impossibility of obliterating our moral perceptions, whatever might be the amount of selfish advantage offered to us in exchange for their sacrifice, is illustrated in the following noble passage.

We may, indeed, agree, by a sacrifice of truth, to call that purple which we see to be yellow; as we may agree, by a still more profligate sacrifice of every noble feeling, to offer to tyranny the homage of our adulation,—to say to the murderer of Thrasea Pætus, "Thou hast done well,"—to the parricide who murdered Agrippina, "Thou hast done more than well." As every new victim falls, we may lift our voice in still louder flattery. We may fall at the proud feet, we may beg, as a boon, the honour of kissing that bloody hand which has been lifted against the helpless; we may do more; we may bring the altar, and the sacrifice, and implore the god not to ascend too soon to heaven. This we may do, for this we have the sad remembrance, that beings of a human form and soul have done. But this is all which we can do. We can constrain our tongue to be false; our features to bend themselves to the semblance of that passionate adoration which we wish to express; our knees to fall prostrate; but our heart we cannot constrain. There virtue must still have a voice which is not to be drowned by hymns and acclamations; there the crimes which we laud as virtues are crimes still; and he whom we have made a god is the most contemptible of mankind; if, indeed, we do not feel perhaps that we are ourselves still more con-

temptible. When is it, I may ask, that the virtue of any one appears to us most amiable? Is it when it seems attended with every thing that can excite the envy even of the wicked,—with wealth, with power, with all which is commonly termed good fortune; and when, if its influence on our emotions depend on the mere images of enjoyment which it suggests, these may surely be supposed to arise most readily? It is amiable, indeed, even in such circumstances; but how much more interesting is it to us, when it is loaded with afflictions from which it alone can derive happiness. It is Socrates in the prison, of whom we think—Aristides in exile; and perhaps Cato, whatever comparative esteem he might have excited, would have been little more interesting in our eyes than Cæsar himself, if Cæsar had not been a successful usurper.

In farther showing that the admiration of actions as virtuous, is not affected by those calculations of loss and gain which a matured and acute mind, reflecting on the nature and consequences of particular actions, might make, a fine illustration is found in a simple primary source.

Every nursery exhibits a fair field for an experiment that may be said to be decisive; and will the selfish moralist submit his theory to the test? Will he take upon his knee that little creature which has, perhaps, scarcely felt a pain since it entered into life, which knows only that it has a friend in every living being that has met its eye, and which has never thought of its own misery as a thing that is possible? Will he watch that listening countenance, every look of which is fixed on his own, as he repeats verse after verse of the ballad which describes some act of injustice and atrocious cruelty; and will he expect to see no tear in those eyes; to hear no sobbings when the misery is extreme; to discover no demonstrations of an indignant wrath that thinks not of itself at the time, but thinks only of the oppressed whom it would gladly succour, of the oppressor on whom it would gladly inflict vengeance. It will be well for that child if, in the corruption of the world, he retain a sympathy with the good and the wretched, and a hatred of guilt, as ardent as he feels in those years of ignorance; if, on learning the relation of virtue to his own happiness, he love it merely as he loved it when he never thought of the relation.

The love of virtue, then, I conclude, is different, and essentially different, from the mere love of selfish gain.

We are then told, in glowing language, what this disinterested and exalting affection is.

The different modifications of the Selfish System, and its refinement and enlargement in that of Paley, are next investigated; and the sanctuary of infancy, the nursery, is again thrown open to demonstrate the fallacy of the theory of universal selfishness, and the truth of the original susceptibility of human nature to pure moral feelings. Certain modifications of the selfish system being finally dismissed, that of Paley is thus described:

After these two lights, in which the system commonly distinguished by the name of the Selfish System of morals has been considered by us, there remains still one other light in which it is to be viewed; that in which the obligation of virtue is supposed to consist merely in an exclusive regard to our own individual eternity of happiness in another life; and virtue itself to consist in obedience to the will of the Supreme Being; not on account of the moral excellence of that Supreme Being, or of his bounty to us, which might seem of itself to demand compliances, that are the only possible expressions of the gratitude of dependent creatures, to him from whom their power as well as their happiness is derived, but without any such views of reverence or gratitude, at least without any such views as are in the slightest degree necessary to the virtue of their motives, merely on account of the power which the Ruler of the

universe possesses, to give or withhold the happiness which is our only object. This form of the selfish system, which has been embraced by many theological writers of undoubted piety and purity, is notwithstanding, I cannot but think, as degrading to the human character as any other form of the doctrine of absolute selfishness; or rather, it is in itself the most degrading of all the forms which the selfish system can assume: because, while the selfishness which it maintains is as absolute and unremitting, as if the objects of personal gain were to be found in the wealth or honours or sensual pleasures of this earth; this very selfishness is rendered more offensive, by the noble image of the Deity which is continually presented to our mind, and presented in all his benevolence, not to be loved, but to be courted with a mockery of affection. The sensualist of the common system of selfishness, who never thinks of any higher object in the pursuit of the little pleasures which he is miserable enough to regard as happiness, seems to me, even in the brutal stupidity in which he is sunk, a being more worthy of esteem than the selfish of another life: to whose view God is ever present, but who view him always only to feel constantly in their heart, that in loving him who has been the dispenser of all the blessings which they have enjoyed, and who has revealed himself in the glorious character of the diffuser of an immortality of happiness, they love not the giver himself, but only the gifts which they have received, or the gifts that are promised. Yet, such is the influence of the mere admission of the being of a God, and of the images of holiness and delight which that divine name is sufficient to suggest, that while the common system of the universal selfishness of virtue has been received by the virtuous themselves with an indignant horror, that was itself almost a confutation of the system, the equally universal selfishness of the doctrines of these theological moralists has been received, not merely without any emotion of disgust, but with the approbation and assent of no small portion of those who, in opposition to the very doctrine which they have embraced, are truly in their hearts disinterested lovers of man, and equally disinterested lovers and worshippers of God.

The doctrine of the absolute selfishness of our homage to God, and of our social virtues, considered as the mere conformity of our wills to the command of him who is the dispenser of eternal happiness and eternal misery, for the sole reason of his power of thus dispensing happiness or misery, and not on account of his own transcendent excellence, that of itself might seem to demand such a conformity, is a doctrine of very old date. But the writer who in modern times has led to the widest diffusion of this doctrine, is Archdeacon Paley, the most popular of all our ethical writers; and one of the most judicious in the mere details of ethics, however false and dangerous I consider his leading doctrines to be. Virtue he defines to be, "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." The last part of the definition is the most important part of the whole; for, the knowledge of this everlasting happiness he supposes to be all which constitutes moral obligation; meaning by obligation, not any feeling of moral love, but the influence of happiness as an object of physical desire, and of pain as an object of physical aversion; one or other of which is to follow our obedience or disobedience to the command of the Power who is the supreme dispenser of both. The will of God is our rule, he says, but "private happiness is our motive," and therefore our obligation. In short, the inducement or temptation to be virtuous, which is all that constitutes our obligation to be virtuous, is precisely of the same kind with the inducements or temptations to vice, which may be said in like manner to constitute an obligation to be vicious. The only difference is, that a good man—that is to say, a person whom we distinguish by the flattering title of good—is more prudent than those whom we have chosen to denominate wicked. Both act from an obligation which may be said to be moral in one case as much as in the other; since in neither is disinterestedness of affection necessary to virtue; and in both there

is that desire of pleasure which is sufficient to constitute an inducement, and therefore, in his acceptance of the word, which he regards as synonymous with inducement, an obligation.

That we have a moral sentiment of obligation, virtue, merit, which is very different from the mere inducements of pleasure near or remote, I surely need not attempt to demonstrate to you, after the remarks already made on the selfish system in general. The doctrine of Paley differs from the general selfish system, only by the peculiar importance which it very justly gives to everlasting happiness and misery, when compared with the brief pains or pleasures of this life. In the scale of selfish gain, it is a greater quantity of physical enjoyment which it has in view. It is a sager selfishness, but it is not less absolute selfishness which it maintains; and it is therefore subject to all the objections which I urged before at great length, and which it would now therefore be idle to repeat.

One great answer obviously presents itself to all those selfish systems which convert the whole of virtue into prudence; and make the differences of virtue and vice in every respect precisely the same in kind, as those of speculators in the market of commerce, who have employed their capital more or less advantageously, in the different bargains that have been offered to them.

The "great answer" must be sought for in our author's text, where giving due praise to Paley, as being in details the most judicious of all our ethical writers, his fundamental principle is upset by arguments which, according to Dr. Chalmers, show the philosopher Brown to be more purely orthodox, according to the opinions of "our highest and best theologians," than the churchman Paley. The system of Paley, (and perhaps "Other Worldliness," the term by which Coleridge defined a certain kind of religion, of which there is a great deal to be found in the Christian world, might be the best nomenclature)—the System then of Paley, or *Other Worldliness*,

which defines virtue to be the "doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, for the sake of everlasting happiness," and which makes, not the love of God, nor the love of mankind, but this love of everlasting happiness, the motive and sole obligation to the good which otherwise we should have had as little moral desire of producing or promoting, as of producing an equal or greater amount of evil, must be allowed to be, in its very essence, as truly selfish, as if it had defined virtue to be the pursuit of mere wealth, or fame, or of the brief dignities, or still briefer pleasures of this mortal existence.

We must here indulge in a rather long extract, as, in closing his examination of the various systems of ethics, Brown takes the opportunity of recapitulating, and finally enforcing his own views. It is also here that, while differing with Paley and other theologians, he displays that coincidence with the opinions of "our best and highest theologians," which Dr. Chalmers has pointed out. In reference to the Selfish System, and in particular to that of Paley,—that of "Other Worldliness," and hence a mere modification of the purely and undisguisedly selfish scheme, Brown argues,—

If the most prudent labourer after his own selfish interest, without the slightest regard for the happiness of others, unless as that happiness may be instrumental to his own, be constantly actuated by the same moral motive which influences the most generous lover of mankind, how strange an illusion is all moral sentiment, which views with such different feelings objects that are in every moral respect precisely the same! But it is

in our emotions alone that our notions of morality have their rise: and how illusive, therefore, and radically false I should rather say, must be that system which is founded on the absolute similarity of feelings that are recognised by every bosom as absolutely dissimilar!

Though I trust, then, it is sufficiently evident to you, from the results of the long discussion in which we have been engaged, that the moral obligation to virtue is not, as Paley says, the mere inducement of pleasure held out to us by power which we cannot disobey, without losing the pleasure, and encountering pain, but an inducement of a nobler kind, since pleasure, though it may lead us to be virtuous, may surely, as mere pleasure, if there be no essential distinction of it, as pure or impure, right or wrong, often lead us into what we are at present accustomed to denominate vice; and though I shall therefore not repeat, in application to this enlarged selfishness, which extends its interested view through immortality, the objections previously urged against that more limited selfishness which looks only to the surface of the earth, and to the few years in which we are to be moving along it, it may be of importance to make a few remarks on that other part of the doctrine of this celebrated moralist, which makes conformity to the will of God the rule of virtue.

That virtuous actions—those actions which excite in us the feeling of moral approval—are conformable to the will of God, there can be no reason to doubt; since the very universality of this approval may be regarded as a sort of expression of the divine approbation. As little can we doubt that when the declared will of God is present to our mind, and we think of certain actions as commanded by him, of certain other actions as prohibited by him, and when, in designing or meditating any action, we feel that it is one of those which he has prohibited, there would arise in our mind an instant feeling of disapprobation, that is to say, of vice or demerit, in the performance of the prohibited action. But the question is not, whether it be virtue to conform our will to that of the Deity, when that will is revealed to us, or clearly implied; for of this there can be no doubt. It is, whether there be not in our nature a principle of moral approbation, from which our feelings of obligation, virtue, merit, flow; and which operates, not independently of the divine will indeed, for it was the divine will which implanted in us this very principle; but without the necessary consideration, at the time, of the expression of the divine will, and consequently without any intentional conformity to it or disobedience, or which in our obedience itself, as often as we think of the divine will, is the very principle by which we feel the duty of such conformity. The mother, though she should, at the moment, forget altogether that there is a God in nature, would still turn with moral horror from the thought of murdering the little prattler who is sporting at her knee, and who is not more beautiful to her eye by external charms and graces, than beautiful to her heart by the thousand tendernesses which every day and almost every hour is developing; while the child, who perhaps has scarcely heard that there is a God, or who at least is ignorant of any will of God, in conformity with which virtue consists, is still in his very ignorance developing those moral feelings which are supposed to be inconsistent with such ignorance, and would not have the same feeling of complacency in repaying the parental caresses with acts of intentional injury, as when he repays them with expressions of reciprocal love.

The expression of the divine will, indeed, not merely gives us new and nobler duties to perform, it gives a new and nobler delight also to the very duties which our nature prompts; but still there are duties which our nature prompts, and the violation of which is felt as moral wrong, even when God is known and worshipped only as a demon of power, still less benevolent than the very barbarians who howl around his altar in their savage sacrifice.

But for the principle of moral approbation which the divine being has fixed in our nature, the expression of his will would itself have no moral power, whatever physical pain or pleasure it might hold out to our pru-

dent choice. It may be asked, why should we obey the divine command, with as much reason as it may be asked, why should we love our parents or our country? and our only answer to both questions, as far as morality can be said to be concerned, or any feeling different from that of a mere calculation of physical loss or gain, is, that such is our nature; that, in considering the command of God, our greatest of benefactors, or in considering the happiness of our parents, our country, mankind, which it is in our power to promote, we feel that to act in conformity with these, will be followed by our moral approbation; as to act in opposition to them will be followed by inevitable self-reproach. There is a principle of moral discrimination already existing in us, that, even when we conform our conduct to the divine will, is the very principle by which we have felt the duty of this delightful conformity; and if there be no such principle in our nature, by which we discover the duty of the conformity, it is surely very evident that there can be no such duty to be felt, any more than there can be colour to the blind, or melody to the deaf.

God may be loved by us, or feared by us. He may be loved by us as the source of all our blessings, conferred or promised. He may be feared by us as a being who has the power of inflicting on us eternal anguish. In one of these views, we may, when we obey him, act from gratitude; in the other, from a sense of the evils which we have to dread in offending him. But if it be a duty of gratitude to obey God, we must previously have been capable of knowing that gratitude is a virtue, as much as we must have been capable of knowing the power of God, before we could have known to fear his awful dominion. We consider the Deity as possessing the highest moral perfection: but in that theological view of morality which acknowledges no mode of estimating excellence beyond that divine command itself, whatever it might have been, these words are absolutely meaningless; since if, instead of what we now term virtue, he had commanded only what we now term vice, his command must still have been equally holy. If, indeed, the system of Paley, and of other theological moralists, were just, what excellence beyond the excellence of mere power, could we discover in that divine being whom we adore as the supreme goodness, still more than we fear him as the omnipotent?

In the system of Hobbes, which considers law itself, as constituent of moral right, a tyrant, if his power of enacting law be sufficiently established, is not to be distinguished, in his very tyranny, from the generous sovereign of the free; because the measure of right is to be found in his will alone.

The will of God, then, though it is unquestionably the source of virtue, in the most important sense—as it was his will that formed all the principles of our constitution, of which the principle of moral approbation is one—is not the source of virtue in the sense in which that phrase is understood by some theological writers, as limited to the mere declaration of his will, sanctioned by punishment and reward. There is an earlier law of God, which he has written in our hearts; and the desire of our mere personal happiness or misery, in this or in another world, is truly an object of our approbation, not the source of it; since the love of mere selfish enjoyment is at least as powerfully the motive to vice, in some cases, as it is in other cases the motive to virtue. We do not merely submit to the will of God as we submit to any power which it is impossible for us to resist. We feel that it would be not imprudence only, but guilt, to wish to disobey it. We seek, in the constitution of our nature, the reason which leads us to approve morally of the duty of this conformity of our will to his beneficent and supreme will; and we find, in one of the essential principles of our nature, the moral reason which we seek.

This is a long, but it is, we conceive, an important passage; and, besides, the work from which it is taken may be regarded, in relation to general readers, as one still unknown.

Differing from Smith in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, and denying his leading doctrine, Dr. Brown gives that philosopher's treatise the high praise of being a work of "the first rank in the most interesting to man of all the sciences." We cannot quote Dr. Brown's outline of Dr. Smith's theory of Sympathy as the origin of our moral feelings; but one short passage, which gives a tolerably fair notion of the sympathetic hypothesis, together with its refutation, is apt for our purpose of cataloguing Brown's Lectures.

If the doctrine of the necessary antecedence of sympathy to our moral approbation or disapprobation be just, the system may be admitted, even though many of his minor illustrations should appear to be false. If this primary doctrine be not just, the system, however ingenious and just in its explanation of many phenomena of the mind, must fail as a theory of our moral sentiments.

To derive our moral sentiments, which are as universal as the actions of mankind that come under our review, from the occasional sympathies, that warm or sadden us with joys and griefs and resentments which are not our own, seems to me, I confess, very nearly the same sort of error as it would be to derive the waters of an ever-flowing stream from the sunshine or shade that may occasionally gleam over it. That we have a principle of social feeling, which, in its rapid participation of the vivid emotions of others, seems to identify us in many cases with the happy or the sorrowful, the grateful or the indignant, it is impossible to deny. But this sympathy, quick as it truly is to arise, in cases in which the primary feelings are vivid and strongly marked, is not a perpetual accompaniment of every action of every one around us. There must be some vividness of feeling in others, or the display of vividness of feeling, or at least such a situation as usually excites vivid feeling, of some sort, in those who are placed in it, to call the sympathy itself into action. . . . There is no theory of our moral distinctions, which supposes that we are to approve equally of all actions that are right, and to disapprove equally of all actions which are wrong; but it is essential to one theory—that theory which we are considering—that there should be no feeling of right or wrong, merit or demerit, and consequently no moral estimation whatever, where there is no previous sympathy in that particular case. . . .

This essential error, the greatest of all possible systematic errors, is no less than the assumption, in every case, of those very moral feelings which are supposed to flow from sympathy, the assumption of them as necessarily existing before that very sympathy in which they are said to originate.

Of all the principles of our mixed nature, sympathy is perhaps one of the most irregular, varying not in different individuals only, but even in the same individual in different hours or different minutes of the same day, and varying, not with slight differences, but with differences of promptness and liveliness, with which only feelings the most capricious could be commensurable. If our virtue and vice, therefore, or our views of actions as right or wrong, varied with our sympathy, we might be virtuous at morning, vicious at noon, and virtuous again at night, without any change in the circumstances of our action, except in our greater or less tendency to vividness of sympathy, or to the expectation of more or less vivid sympathies in others.

By all the eminent writers from whom he differs, Dr. Brown deals with perfect candour and mildness. The doctrine which bears the name of Hobbes, Brown, from the very constitution of his own mind, must have disliked; but even for Hobbes there is the charitable apology that he might in some measure have been driven into error by the disorganized state of society, by the

civil dissensions of the period, and "by a wish to lessen the inquisitorial and domineering influence of the priesthood of a fanatical age, by rendering even religion itself subject to the decision of the civil power."

But it is more than time that we had reached the practical, and more directly instructive part of this work; where, first principles having been ascertained, and objections refuted, philosophical investigation and argument cease, and the severe analyst becomes the eloquent expounder of the particular virtues. This will, no doubt, to a very large class of readers, form the very pith and marrow of the entire work. It is replete with beauties of every varied kind; of pure and lofty sentiment, of glowing imagery, and of the moral excellence which teaches by actual representation. The practical virtues are divided into three classes; namely, the duties which we primarily owe to our fellow-creatures, those that relate directly to ourselves; and, lastly, the duties which we owe to the Great Being who formed us; and "human life," it is said, "when it is worthy of the name of life, consists in the exercise of these duties."

From the section in which the negative duty of not violating the rights of property is treated, we select a few sentences as a specimen of the clear manner in which controverted points are settled:

The writers who attempt to prove justice to be a virtue wholly adventitious, and not the result of any original moral tendency of our nature, because in different stages or circumstances of society there are different views of property, forget that justice, as a moral virtue, is not the creation of property, but the conformity of our actions to those views; that though all men in every part of the earth, and in every age since the earth was peopled, had, without even the exception of a single monstrous individual, united in their notions of what is termed property, there might still have been the most complete injustice,—a desire of invading this property, not merely as frequent as in the present circumstances of mankind, but equally universal with the notion of property itself. There might then, the mere notion of property remaining in every respect precisely the same, have been either perfect justice or perfect injustice, or such a mixture of both as the present order of society presents.

In the different rights of property then, in different nations and ages, as variously sanctioned in various systems of jurisprudence, I perceive no inconsistency of the moral principle. I perceive every where, on the contrary, a moral principle which, among the rude and the civilized, and in all the innumerable gradations of civilized life, and of systems of law more or less sage and refined, feels that there are certain things which it would be wrong to invade; in savage life, perhaps only the objects which are in the immediate occupation of another, or on which he has exercised his labour for purposes of utility to himself; in more civilized society, innumerable objects which the circumstances of that society have rendered essential to the comfort of their possessor, and which law, with a view to the preservation and furtherance of general happiness, has allotted in various ways.

It is the same moral principle of justice still, though directed to new objects; as it is still the same power of vision that traces the stars of the firmament, though, but for the nice contrivances of the optician, and the labour of all the ruder artificers who have furnished him with the materials of his beautiful art, eye after eye might for ages have gazed upon the great vault above, without knowing the very existence of brilliant multitudes of worlds, which, with the aid of this skilful but simple contrivance, it is now impossible for the rudest observer not to perceive. Who is there that, on

this account, will deny to the mind its original visual sensibility ?

In contending for essential principles of morals, no one asserts that, in circumstances which are absolutely different, the moral sentiment should be the same; more than that an eye, with and without a telescope, should form the same views of the nature that is before it. . . .

Justice, then, I repeat, (and the distinction is one which is of great importance,) is not what constitutes property; it is that virtue which presupposes property, and respects it, however constituted. It may vary, therefore, with all the ordinances of different social states, but it is still the same virtue, if it respect what, in those different states, is legally assigned to individuals.

We must apologize for obliterations. Those who have opportunity may soon supply for themselves all that we have been compelled to suppress; and to a less fortunate class we wish to indicate, in substance, the excellence which we cannot present in detail. In discussing a particular mode of injuring our fellow-creatures, by robbing them of the affections which are their right, and which constitute their happiness, we find, among the strictures on modern manners in high life, the following remarks on their tendency to relax moral principle :—

In the present state of manners, in which, at least among the higher orders of society, there is so very little of what was once considered as domestic life, and, in the place of its simple unpretending enjoyments, such constant and close succession of almost theatrical exhibitions, on stages on which each is to each mutually spectacle and spectator; to perform gracefully their part is as much an object of ambition to the unpaid actors and actresses, in this voluntary and unremitting drama, as it is to the actors and actresses on another stage, whose livelihood, as well as glory, depends on the number of hands which they can render by their best efforts most noisy in applause. That there is a very powerful charm in elegant manners, and in the lighter eloquence of conversation, which can adapt itself readily to every subject, from the statesmanship of the day to the flower or the feather, I am far from denying; and that, even in a moral view, from the influence which it gives to the opinions of the individual, and the easy happiness which it spreads to all around him, this excellence, frivolous as it may seem, is not to be despised, however humble and comparatively insignificant it must always be rated, when placed in the scale of merit with nobler wisdom, or still nobler excellence of the heart. One great evil of this system of universal display, however, and of the familiar and sprightly levities which it involves, is, that where this gay excellence is of high value, the praise of it must be sought from all. To all alike must be paid those gallantries of manners which all alike are to admire. The wedded and the unwedded may thus be said to live in a constant interchange of symbols of affection, which, though understood to be mere symbols, may yet, as symbols, excite that very affection which they were never seriously intended to awake. Nor is this all.

But we shall not go farther.

From among the many beautiful lessons which these pages present to us, we shall perhaps best accomplish our purpose of showing the value of this work as a moral guide, by detaching a few examples. This is from the chapter *On abstaining from injuring the character of others*.

The evil which calumny can do to those whose virtue is scarcely in need of any support from public approbation, is slight, when compared with the evil which it may produce to those whose weaker virtue is mixed with much imperfection, that affords an easy pretext for censure, even when censure is unmerited; while the loss

of the encouraging regard of others is more injurious, when withheld from frailty, that, even when it wishes to do what is worthy of praise, is too ready to fall, without the support to which it clings. The real imperfections of mankind are, therefore, delightful to the heart of the slanderer, who sees in them only a warrant for all those additional charges of guilt or error which it may be his interest to add to the real amount. They are the elements of the poison which he prepares, without which he would have as little power to cloud the moral scene, as the enchantresses of ancient fable would have had to obscure the sun, or bring down the mists from the sky, without the baleful herbs that were essential to the incantation.

It is our duty, I will not say only to love the good, but even with our indignation against the wicked to mix some portion of pity; that pity which would lead us always to wish, that even their names could still be added to the list of the virtuous. If such be our duty then, what are we to think of those who, far from pitying the wicked, would gladly double all their atrocities, and who, still farther from loving the good, would point them out, as the wicked, to public execration ! . . .

But, if the tale which we love to whisper be just, can it be a crime to lament over guilt that is real ! It is not a crime to lament over guilt, if we do lament over it. But if we do truly lament over the probable appearances of it, we shall not be very eager to circulate a doubt that may be injurious, till we have reason ourselves, not to doubt merely, but to believe. I do not wish to recommend that weakness of humanity, which, in the world, often passes current for virtue, though it implies rather a defect of moral feeling, than any refinement of it,—or which at least, if it be virtue, is a virtue that can bear of oppression, and even witness it, without feeling indignation against the oppressor; and which rather would see a thousand repetitions of the injury, than give to the wicked the name and the odium which he deserves. When crimes are walking secretly in darkness, as much as when they present themselves proudly in the very sunshine of day, it is our duty to the innocent who have suffered, to give them the consolation of our sympathy, in the indignant feeling of their wrongs; as it is our duty to the innocent who may suffer, to call them to beware. Even in denouncing guilt, however, the office which we exercise is an office of duty, not of pleasure. It is to be exercised, not with the eagerness of one who rejoices in discovering something which he may condemn, but with the sorrow of a lover of humankind, who is forced to add another moral ill to the catalogue of human delinquencies. Such are the feelings of a generous spirit, even when the vice which it discovers is of a species that implies more than ordinary moral turpitude; and when it discovers only such foibles as are not inconsistent with the ordinary proportion of human virtue, it will love rather to speak of the virtue than of the failing; it will think not of what the individual is only, but of what human nature is; and will not withhold from one the indulgence which it must extend to all, and of which it must even, on some occasions, have too good reason for wishing the extension to itself.

When the propagators of tales of scandal think that they have completely justified themselves, by declaring that all which they have said is true, they forget that there are virtues of which they are silent, that are true, as well as the defects of which they speak with such minute and exact remembrance; and that, if they were to omit all notice of what is excellent in a character, and to cull only what is defective, the most illustrious of mankind, without any positive violation of biographic truth, might soon cease to be illustrious.

From the section which treats of *Veracity* as a virtue, we gather the following remarks :—

So much of the happiness of social life is derived from the use of language, and so profitless would the mere power of language be, but for the truth which dictates it, that the abuse of the confidence which is placed in our declarations, may not merely be in the highest

degree injurious to the individual deceived, but would tend, if general, to throw back the whole race of mankind into that barbarism from which they have emerged, and progressively ascended through still purer air and still brighter sunshine to that noble height which they have reached. It is not wonderful, therefore, that veracity, so important to the happiness of all, and yet subject to so many temptations of personal interest in the violation of it, should, in all nations, have had a high place assigned to it among the virtues.

That, in the case of a virtue, so essential to the commerce of life, man should have been led instinctively to the practice of it, would not of itself appear absurd, or even very wonderful, to those who consider the other instinctive tendencies in our constitution; and since all, in uttering falsehood, are conscious of an effort which represses the truth that seems to start of itself to the lips, and all seem to believe what is told them, till the experience of frequent deceit have induced some degree of doubt in the young listener, who begins to be a sceptic, it has been supposed, by many philosophers, that there are, in our nature, two instinctive tendencies adapted to each other,—a tendency to speak truth, and a tendency to believe what is spoken. . . .

We are conscious of an effort in speaking falsehood; because, but for this effort, our feelings would of themselves suggest their corresponding signs; and we have thus to repress the truth that rises spontaneously, and to invent laboriously the combinations of words that are in discord with our belief. What wonder is there that, when we walk through a meadow in a sunny evening of autumn, there should arise to the mind, and thus to ready utterance, phrases expressive of the real feelings—How beautiful is this scene, and how happy these cattle appear!—rather than phrases which have no connexion with the real feelings, and which cannot be supposed, therefore, to be readily uttered, because they are not readily suggested.

In treating of the various modes of seduction, by which we may injure the virtue of our fellow-creatures, flattery is considered as among the most vicious. The flatterer is held to be one of the worst of seducers; and his arts are not confined to the courts of kings, and the mansions of those who enjoy almost regal splendour, but are said to descend to a scale which includes the humblest of mankind. There are many ways in which flattery may perform its base work.

Flattery, the fosterer of vanity, and often of affections more degrading, implies, in whatever station the flatterer and the flattered may be, a disregard of the virtue of others, which in itself is no slight vice. But the sly bribery of praise is not the only bribery with which human selfishness would strive to seduce human selfishness. There are grosser bribes, which those who count themselves honourable men, and are aspiring to stations of still higher honour, have no hesitation in employing for the furtherance of useful vice. A little perjury, real or implied, is all which they require; and they are content to pay for it its fair market price, or even to raise a little the market price, if perjury should have grown more reluctant than before, or more skilful in the calculation of its own exact value. It is painful to think, that an offence against public morals, of such serious import, should be so lightly estimated by those who strive to forget their own delinquency, in the equal and familiar delinquency of others; as if the very wideness of guilt were not an additional reason for ceasing to contribute to that which has been already so extensively baneful;—and that the first step to the legislation of the freest and most virtuous nation on the earth, to the noblest of all the trusts which a nation can bestow,—that of enacting the means by which its own tendencies to guilt may be lessened,—should, in so many instances, be the purchase of a crime, or of many crimes.

There is another species of seduction upon which

Dr. Brown pours forth the vials of unmitigated moral reprobation, with a warmth in which he rarely, if ever, indulges, save when his feelings lean to the side of generous pity or glowing approbation.

There is [he says] one species of corruption, which is exercised from a love of the corruption itself, or at least from the mere pleasure of companionship in guilt,—a spirit of malicious proselytism, which forms the last dreadful stage of vice; when the gray-headed veteran of debaucheries that began in youth, and have been matured by a long life of unceasing excess in all that is gross and depraved, till he have acquired a sort of oracular gravity of profligacy among gayer profligates, collects around him his band of youthful disciples, whom he has gathered wherever his watchful eye could mark out another victim; relates to them the tales of merriment of other years, as an excitement to present passions; observes in each the few virtues which will need even yet to be repressed, the irresolute vices that will require to be strengthened; and, if on some ingenious cheek a blush should still arise, marks it with a sort of joy, that almost calculates the moment of triumph when that blush shall have been washed away, to appear again no more. If there be a being on this earth whom it is permitted to us to hate with full and absolute detestation, it is surely a human demon like this; and, if we could trace through all its haunts the licentiousness of a single great city,—from the splendid gaming-house of the rich to the obscure chambers of vulgar riot, in which the dissolute of another order assemble to plan the frauds or robberies of the night, or to turn to the only uses to which they know how to turn them, the frauds or robberies of the preceding day,—of how many demons of this class should we trace the horrible power, in the lessons which they are giving, and the results of lessons which have been given!

Another order of reckless corrupters and tormentors of their species are the scoffers, the audacious blasphemers, and withering, malignant sophists. Of this class it is indignantly said,—

They are too wise not to discern that the evident tendency of that which they value only as acute, is to corrupt human virtue, and extinguish the best hopes and consolations of human suffering. But it is sufficient comfort to them, that if they render miserable those whose virtue they corrupt, they have at least not corrupted them without the observance of some of the most exact technicalities of logic. Such are the various forms of direct corruption.

No one, we presume, questions the influence of the domestic example of the court and the aristocracy upon all the inferior classes of a society existing under a monarchy. On this subject it is remarked,—

In considering the influence of example on national virtue, we are too apt to think only of the authority of those who are placed in eminent stations; and to forget the more direct influence of domestic examples on those individuals, who must always indeed be ranked as individuals, but whose virtues or vices united are the virtues or vices of the nation. The example of the great may give the primary impulse, but the force descends progressively from rank to rank; and each is affected chiefly by those who are around him, or a very little above him. The parents who hang over our cradle, thinking for us, before we have formed what can be called a thought, and who continue, during life, to be viewed by us with a peculiar sort of tender veneration, which no other created being seems to us entitled to possess,—the comrades of our pastimes in boyhood, and the friends who partake with us the graver occupations, and graver pastimes of our maturer years,—these are they who transfuse into us their feelings, and from whom, without thinking of them as examples, we derive all that good

or evil which example can afford; and yield ourselves more completely to the influence, because we are not aware that we are yielding to any influence whatever. To be frequently with the good is to know, on almost every occasion, how the good would act in the situation in which we are placed, and to feel, at the same time, that reverence for the action itself as it seems to us recommended by their choice, which we must have felt for those whom we imagine as performers of it. Whatever impresses on us strongly the image of the virtuous, therefore, cannot be indifferent to our virtue. The very meeting of a great man, as Seneca strongly says, may be of lasting advantage to us; and we derive instruction even from his very silence.

It is this universal radiation of example, reflecting light upon example, which forms the moral splendour of an age; without some portion of the light of which, good laws are powerless; and with which it is almost a matter of little moment, at least to the existing generation, how few the laws may be under which good men are living in peace.

In speaking of the injury which we may do by disturbing the mental tranquillity of those with whom we have social relations, the bad effects of haughtiness and superciliousness are characterized; but there are other and baser modes of injuring the mental tranquillity of others,—

It is not the insolence of the haughty, however, which is the only intentional disquiet of others. There is a power in every individual, over the tranquillity of almost every individual. There are emotions latent in the mind of those whom we meet, which a few words of ours may at any time call forth; and the moral influence which keeps this power over the uneasy feelings of others under due restraint, is not the least important of the moral influences, in its relation to general happiness.

There are minds which can delight in exercising this cruel sway; which rejoice in suggesting thoughts that may poison the confidence of friends, and render the very virtues that were loved, objects of suspicion to him who loved them. In the daily and hourly intercourse of human life, there are human beings who exert their malicious skill in devising what subjects may be most likely to bring into the mind of him with whom they converse, the most mortifying remembrances; who pay visits of condolence that they may be sure of making grief a little more severely felt; who are faithful in conveying to every one the whispers of unmerited scandal, of which, otherwise, he never would have heard, as he never could have suspected them.

But we need not follow out the representation of the Malagrowthers and Mrs. Candours of society, against whose malevolent power the true preservative is that which is the protector of the virtuous from all other injury — “their own purity of conscience.”

The Duties of Benevolence have afforded our author a delightful and most congenial theme, on which he has descanted in flowing and graceful language, springing free from the heart. A portion of a very subordinate division of this discourse must suffice for us — that which describes the nature of true Politeness:

Politeness, — which is, when ranks are equal, what affability is, when the more distinguished mingle with the less distinguished — is the natural effect of that benevolence which regards always with sympathetic complacency, and is fearful of disturbing, even by the slightest momentary uneasiness, the serenity of others. A breach of attention in any of the common offices of civility, to which the arbitrary usages of social life have attached importance, even when nothing more is intended, is still a neglect, and neglect is itself an insult; it is the immediate cause of a pain which no human

being is entitled, where there has been no offence, to give to any other human being. Politeness, then, — the social virtue that foresees and provides against every unpleasant feeling that may arise in the breasts around, as if it were some quicksighted and guardias power, intent only on general happiness, — is something far more dignified in its nature than the cold courtesies which pass current under that name, the mere knowledge of fashionable manners, and an exact adherence to them. It is in its most essential respects what may be possessed by those who know little of the varying vocabulary and varying usages of the season. The knowledge of these is, indeed, necessary to such as mingle in the circles which require them; but they are necessary only as the new fashion of the coat or splendid robe, which leaves him or her who wears it the same human being, in every respect, as before; and are not more a part of either, than the ticket of admission, which opens to their ready entrance the splendid apartment from which the humble are excluded. The true politeness of the heart is something which cannot be given by those who minister to mere decoration. It is the moral grace of life, if I may venture so to term it — the grace of the mind; and what the world counts graces, are little more than graces of the body.

This subjoined remark is made on a particular phase of benevolence; and many liberal and substantially benevolent persons would do well to consider it:—

Even in pecuniary liberalities, benevolence does not merely produce good, but it knows well, or it learns to know, the greatest amount of good which its liberalities can produce. To be the cause of less happiness or comfort than might be diffused at the same cost, is almost a species of the same vice which withholds aid from those who require it. The benevolent, therefore, are magnificent in their bounty, because they are economical even in bounty itself. Their heart is quick to perceive sources of relief where others do not see them; and the whole result of happiness produced by them, seems often to have arisen from a superb munificence which few could command, when it may, perhaps, have proceeded only from humble means, which the possessor of similar means, without similar benevolence, would think scarcely more than necessary for his own strict necessities.

And Dr. Brown, who throughout his whole work draws largely from the poets, ancient and modern, finds an apt and charming illustration with which to close his subject, in Pope's picture of “The Man of Ross.” It is in this division of the work that the theories of Godwin and others are refuted, which make moral duties depend upon the absolute merits of the individual, independently of his particular relationship to the agent; or which lay down, in short, that the preference of natural affection is a vicious feeling, as it may lead us to prefer, or to love, our own faulty father or benefactor above some more virtuous and deserving person, whom we erroneously suppose to have no particular claim upon our duty or regard. This system of sole universal duty hardly required refutation. The common sense and common feelings of mankind disclaim it.

We find [says our author] the universal feelings of mankind accordant with the system of particular duties, that is so largely productive of happiness. In every region of the earth, and in all circumstances of society, the indulgence of the private affections is considered not as allowable merely, but as obligatory.

In closing the subject of special duties to certain individuals, as to parents, to benefactors, and to friends, it is beautifully said,—

Heaven has adapted the vividness of our affections to our power of being beneficial; the love being most lively

in those moral connexions, in which the opportunities of usefulness are most frequent, and capable of being most accurately applied, in relation to the peculiar wants of him who is to be benefited. . . . It is not evil, then, for man upon the whole, that, in wishing the happiness of all mankind, he should wish, in an especial manner, the happiness of those who are connected with him by peculiar ties.

Among private duties, those of the parent take the first place. They are set forth in due order; but Brown indulges in strictures which embrace a higher and wider range than the ground usually trode by commonplace moral instructors; and here, as in many other instances, he proves his title to the high praise of Dr. Chalmers, when this Christian teacher says of him,—“There is no author, who has not expressly treated of revelation, whose mental philosophy suggests so many accordances between the science of mind and the subject-matter of Christianity.” Such a writer as Dr. Chalmers describes, is surely to be regarded as an eminent authority when he speaks of the moral and religious discipline by which it is the duty of parents to train their children.

How many parents do we see, who, after teaching their sons by example every thing which is licentious in manners, and lavishing on them the means of similar licentiousness, are rigid only in one point—in the strictness of that intellectual discipline which may prepare them for the worldly stations to which the parental ambition has been unceasingly looking for them, before the filial ambition was rendered sufficiently intent of itself!—how many, who allow to the vices of the day full liberty, if the lesson of the day be duly meditated; and who are content that those whose education they direct should be knaves and sensualists, if only they be fitted by intellectual culture to be the leaders of other knaves, and the acquirers of wealth that may render their sensuality more delicately luxurious! To such persons, the mind of the little creature whom they are training to worldly stations for worldly purposes, is an object of interest only as that without which it would be impossible to arrive at the dignities expected. It is a necessary instrument for becoming rich and powerful; and if he could become powerful, and rich, and envied, without a soul,—exhibit the same spectacle of magnificent luxury, and be capable of adding to the means of present pomp what might furnish out a luxury still more magnificent, they would scarcely feel that he was a being less noble than now. In what they term education, they have never once thought that the virtues were to be included as objects; and they would truly feel something very like astonishment if they were told that the first and most essential part of the process of educating the moral being whom Heaven had consigned to their charge, was yet to be begun, in the abandonment of their own vices, and the purification of their own heart by better feelings than those which had corrupted it; without which primary self-amendment, the very authority that is implied in the noble office which they were to exercise, might be a source not of good but of evil to him who was unfortunately born to be its subject.

Though the enjoyments of this world, which so many seek as all, were truly all, and we ceased to exist when our mortal existence terminated, it would still be the duty of the parent to consult the happiness of the child, more than those circumstances of accidental happiness which may sometimes lead to it, but often, perhaps as often, are productive of misery; and, even of the short happiness of this short life, how large is the part which we have to ascribe to our virtuous affections, or rather, how very little is there of pure happiness which we can ascribe to any other source! But when we think how small a portion of our immortal existence is comprised in this earthly life; when, amid sensual pleasures that

fade almost in the moment in which they are enjoyed and wealth and dignities that are known more in their rapid changes, as passing from possessor to possessor, than as truly possessed by any one of the multitude, who, in their turns, obtain and lose them, we feel that, amid so many perishable and perishing things, virtue, the source of all which it is delightful to remember, is the only permanent acquisition which can be made,—how completely must he seem to have neglected the duty of a parent, who has thought only of a few years that are as nothing, and neglected that immortality which is all. If we had a long voyage to undertake, it would be but a cruel kindness that should pour forth its bounty on a single day, and provide for us only one repast, however costly. It is surely a kindness not less cruel which, in the common offices of education, thinks but of a single day, and makes provision only for its comfort in that endless course, not of years, but of ages, on which we enter in entering into life.

In discussing the parental duties, as they relate to the temporal circumstances of children, Dr. Brown, though indirectly, lifts up his testimony as a moralist against the law of primogeniture, while condemning the selfish prodigality through which the extravagance of parents consigns their children to indigence, rendered more bitter by previous habits of luxury. He says,—

I allude to the intentional deliberate sacrifice which is made of the comforts of many children to the wealth of one,—a sacrifice which has usually, or at least often, tended only to make one less virtuous than he would have been, and many less happy. The national consequences of the privileges of primogeniture and of sex, belong to inquiries in political jurisprudence. At present, it is not of these that I speak. It is only of the wants of the children, and the affection and duty of the parent. These wants are obviously equal in all; and if the merits of all be equal, the affection of the parent should be the same, and his duty equal to all who, with equal wants and equal merits, are consigned to his equal love. . . . Nor is it only to those whom he directly wills to impoverish, that he is guilty of a breach of duty; he is equally guilty of it, in many cases, to the single individual whom he exclusively enriches, if, in estimating what he confers, we consider the virtue and happiness, or vice and misery, that may arise from it, and not the mere wealth, which in itself is nothing.

The power and superiority thus bestowed on one favoured child, may not always be abused; but it is regarded as ever perilous to human virtue, to have too much power imposed on human weakness.

In the section of the filial duties, we would point out one passage which applies with peculiar force to our own society and age; for when and in what country did so many young persons of both sexes receive an education which raised them intellectually so far above their parents? But a tender and pathetic passage, descriptive of one form of filial duty, where love is the sole inspirer, concludes thus, before the observations begin to which we wish more especially to draw attention,—

How delightful is the spectacle, when, amid all the temptations of youth and beauty, we witness some gentle heart, that gives to the couch of the feeble, and, perhaps, of the thankless and repining, those hours which others find too short for the successive gaieties with which an evening can be filled, and that prefers to the smile of universal admiration the single smile of enjoyment, which, after many vain efforts, has at last been kindled on one solitary cheek!

If filial love be thus ready to bear with bodily and moral infirmities, it is not less ready to bear with intellectual weakness. There is often, especially in the middle classes of life, as great a difference of mental

culture in the parent and the child as if they had lived at the distance of many centuries. The wealth that has been acquired by patient industry, or some fortunate adventure, may be employed in diffusing all the refinement of science and literature to the children of those; to whom the very words, science and literature, are words of which they would scarcely be able, even with the help of a dictionary, to understand the meaning. In a rank of life still lower, there are not wanting many meritorious individuals, who, uninstructed themselves, labour indefatigably to obtain the means of liberal instruction for one whose wisdom, in after years, when he is to astonish the village, may gratify at once their ambition and their love. It would, indeed, be painful to think, that any one, whose superiority of knowledge has cost his parents so much fatigue, and so many privations of comforts, which, but for the expense of the means of his acquired superiority, they might have enjoyed, should turn against them, in his own mind, the acquirements which were to them of so costly a purchase; despising them for the very ignorance which gave greater merit to their sacrifice, and proud of a wisdom far less noble, when it can thus feel contempt, than the humble ignorance which it despises.

Our attention is strongly drawn to many passages, illustrative of the personal virtues or duties: but we must pass them all, without even enumeration, except the remarks on the motives which alone can justify a woman in taking upon herself the solemn engagements of marriage. And, by the way, our philosopher,—though most courteous to the sex,—in matrimonial differences, lays down the law, that though it would certainly be desirable to give place to frequent exceptions, and that the woman where wiser and more virtuous should decide, yet from the importance of the general rule of the man being in such cases the judge, the husband must have this power. And here, as in many other instances, Dr. Brown recognises the doctrine of Utility, if not as the origin, then as the frequent test of moral obligation. But to return to the duties of young ladies contracting marriage.

If it be necessary for man to be careful to whom he engages himself by a vow so solemn, it is surely not less necessary for the gentler tenderness of woman. She, too, has duties to fulfil, that depend on love, or at least that can be sweetened only by love; and when she engages to perform them where love is not felt, she is little aware of the precariousness of such a pledge, and of the perils to which she is exposing herself. It is truly painful then to see, in the intercourse of the world, how seldom affection is considered as a necessary matrimonial preliminary, at least in one of the parties, and in the one to whom it is the more necessary; and how much quicker the judgment of fathers, mothers, friends, is, to estimate the wealth or the worldly dignity than the wisdom or the virtue which they present as a fit offering to her, whom wealth and worldly dignity may render only weaker and more miserable, but whom wisdom might counsel and virtue cherish. It is painful to see one who has, in other respects, perhaps, many moral excellencies, consent, as an accomplice in this fraud, to forego the moral delicacy which condemns the apparent sale of affection that is not to be sold,—rejoice in the splendid sacrifice which is thus made of her peace,—consign her person to one whom she despises, with the same indifference as she consigns her hand,—a prostitute for gold, not less truly because the prostitution is to be for life, and not less criminally a prostitute, because to the guilt and meanness of the pecuniary barter, are added the guilt of a mockery of tenderness that wishes to deceive man, and the still greater guilt of a perjury that, in vows which the heart believes, would wish to deceive the God on whom it calls to sanction the deceit.

When marriages are thus formed, it is not for the sufferer to complain, if she find that she has acquired a

few more trappings of wealth, but not a husband. She has obtained all which she wished to obtain; and the affection and happiness which she scorned, she must leave to those who sought them.

In the lecture upon *the Duties of Contract*, there is an admirable section on the treatment of domestic servants, and in it we find another practical lesson to ladies.

There are beings with gentle voices, and still gentler eyes; with smiles that seem never to be willed, and scarcely even to fade and brighten again, but to be almost the native character of the countenance, like the very lustre that is ever blooming on the cheek and on the lip,—there are beings who seem to exist thus only in a perpetual moral atmosphere of radiance and serenity, that, on the sight of a single particle of dust on a book, or a table, or a chair, as if in that particle a whole mountain of misery were before them, can assume in an instant all the frowns and thunders of all the furies; whose delicate frame is too weak to bear the violent opening of a door, but not too weak, after the door is opened, to shake the very floor with the violence of their own wrath on the unfortunate opener of it.

Indulgence to the lighter imperfections of servants is then an important part of our moral obligation in that temporary domestic relationship which we have contracted. But, though it is a duty which we owe to them, it is at least as much a source of tranquillity to ourselves. A life of constant upbraiding is very far from being a life of happiness. When we make them miserable, they have had already too good a revenge in the very fretfulness of the anger that is wreaked on them.

The Duties of Citizenship, comprehend that of resistance; the "last resource, but still a resource,—"

a resource in those miserable circumstances, in which times, and occasions, and provocations, teach their terrible lesson. When the rare imperious cases do occur, in which the patriotism that before made obedience a duty, allows it no more, to him who feels that he has now another duty to perform,—when he sees, with sorrow, that a cause which is good in itself, will demand the use of means from which, with any other motives, he would have shrunk with abhorrence, he will lift his voice, sadly indeed, but still loudly,—he will lift his arm with reluctance, but, when it is lifted, he will wield it with all the force which the thought of the happiness of the world, as perhaps dependent on it, can give to its original vigour; he has made that calculation in which his own happiness and his own life have scarcely been counted as elements. If he survive and prevail, therefore, though in anticipating the prosperity which he has in part produced, he may sometimes look back on the past with melancholy, he cannot look back on it with regret; and if he fall, he will think only of the aid which his life might have given to that general happiness which he sought,—not of his life itself, as an object of regard, or even as a thing which it would have been possible for him to preserve.

But the duty of resistance is of very rare occurrence, and other neglected duties of citizenship ought to be in frequent exercise. The citizen has to obey the laws and to defend them; and he has higher duties imposed upon him. He is bound to improve institutions, to remedy errors in government, and, in his proper sphere, to attempt the redress of political grievances. The political reformer is by Dr. Brown placed above every other kind of national benefactor, because

The reform of a single political grievance may, in its ultimate effects, be the producer of all which we admire in the thousand acts of individual patriotism,—the opener of fields of industry,—the diffuser of commerce,—the embellisher of a land,—the enlightener and blessing of those who inhabit it. It is not possible, indeed, to

estimate how valuable an offering he makes to society who gives it a single good law.

He, then, is not a true lover of the society to which he belongs, nor faithful to those duties which relate to it, who contents himself with admiring the laws which he might amend; and who, far from wishing to amend them, regards perhaps, or professes to regard, every project of reformation, not as a proposal which is to be cautiously weighed, but as a sort of insult to the dignity of the whole system, which is to be rejected with wrath, and treated almost as a subject of penal censure.

The whole section breathes the manly and enlightened doctrines of freedom and enlarged patriotism.

We have left ourselves no room to consider the graver and most important division of these Lectures, which, first proving the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, leads the way to the elucidation of our duties to the Supreme Being. But we scarcely regret our circumscribed space, as slight justice could be done to this part of the work, by any analysis that could be given of it. Once more we must be content to quote Dr. Chalmers, who, of the *Natural Theology*, which concludes the volume, remarks, — "It deserves a high rank among the highest works of this class. . . . There is no author who has not expressly treated of Revelation, whose mental philosophy suggests so many accordances between the science of mind and the subject-matter of Christianity. From the wide territory of thought over which he [Brown] expatiates, there is no enlightened student, enlightened we mean both in Philosophy and Holy Writ, who might not gather from it fresh proofs and illustrations on the side of the Christian argument.

"And even for the practical objects, we are persuaded, whether of the Christian teacher whose office it is to prepare the weekly lessons of the

pulpit for the instruction of his fellow-men, or of the Christian scholar who is bent on the advancement of his own personal religion — should either of them but dwell thoughtfully and intelligently on the pages of Dr. Brown, he will find, of many views which are given there of the workings of our nature, that they shed a pleasing and confirmatory light on what may be termed the moral dynamics of the gospel.

"Among Christians, there is often a sensitive jealousy and dislike of all human philosophy — a sickliness and fearfulness of recoil from it, wherewith we cannot in the least sympathize. We only wish they could ponder and apply the declaration of Scripture, that 'to the pure all things are pure.'"

It is with reluctance that we lay aside this work, ere we have indicated, in even the slightest way, many of the excellencies which are pointed out in the above testimony. We had marked out several passages, and in particular those on "Our Duty to Ourselves," on "The Cultivation of Moral Excellence," and of "Happiness," which abound in noble and elevated thoughts and sentiments. But we have said enough, and to many of our readers, more than enough, of a work which, though hitherto comparatively little known, except to students of moral philosophy, they will, even on our imperfect showing, see to be deserving of the widest diffusion, and the most attentive study.

To conclude in the words of Dr. Chalmers, "The beauty of such moral pictures as he [Brown] has drawn, and an enthusiasm like his, all on the side of goodness and truth, must find an echo in every bosom; and will meet with an abiding testimony from men of wisdom and worth throughout all ages."

TO THE DOVE.

BY THE LATE J. F. SMITH.

HAIL, emblem of the dearest tie
That human hearts can bind,
Love's all-devoted constancy
When kindred souls are joined !
Than thee, no purer image fills
A niche in nature's shrine,
Type of ecstatic transport's thrills,
And feeling's glow divine.

The eagle and the vulture share
Dominion of the sky ;
I mark th' imperial lords of air
With regal pomp sweep by :
But, ah ! their flight, far sunward spread,
No soft emotion brings ;
Foreboding sounds of wo pervade
The rushing of their wings.

But thou, what melting sweetness glows
In thy long, mellow note,
Heard where the random wild-flower blows
In forest glooms remote.

O, more than language can express,
Of love and truth is there ;—
The depth of woman's tenderness—
The purity of prayer !

More mellowing pathos stamps that strain
Than music's self affords,
To bid the bosom thrill again
From its profoundest chords.

And such its power to give release
From passion's earthly spell,
That, listening, I could bid, in peace,
The realms of time farewell.

Spontaneous worship hallows deep
The scene where none intrudes,
When earth and heaven, communing, keep
The Sabbath of the woods ;
While sunset sanctifies the calm,
Devout, of earth, and skies ;
And low, like prayer from fields of balm,
The breath of evening sighs.

Yet, spotless dove, religion lends
My theme a glory too—
A charm, harmoniously that blends
With nature's simple due.

O marvellous was the sign of love
Through thee to mortals given,
When stooped thy brooding wings above
The Majesty of heaven !

Bird of the consecrated plume,
Whom Earth's Creator chose,
(Whilst yet above its watery tomb
One lonely mountain rose,
To waft the pledge of peace to men,
The olive's welcome bough :
I hail thee, mercy's herald then,
Her sacred symbol now.