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THE

WORKS

OF

DUGALD STEWART.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

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ELEMENTS

OF THE

PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN MIND.

VOL. II.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AFTER an interval of more than twenty years, I venture to present to the public a Second Volume on the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

When the Preceding Part was sent to the press, I expected that a few short chapters would comprehend all that I had further to offer concerning the Intellectual Powers; and that I should be able to employ the greater part of this Volume in examining those principles of our constitution, which are immediately connected with the Theory of Morals. On proceeding, however, to attempt an analysis of Reason, in the more strict acceptation of that term, I found so many doubts crowding on me with respect to the logical doctrines then generally received, that I was forced to abandon the comparatively limited plan according to which I had originally intended to treat of the Understanding, and, in the mean time, to suspend the continuation of my work, till a more unbroken leisure should allow me to resume it with a less divided attention.

Of the accidents which have since occurred to retard my progress, it is unnecessary to take any notice here. I allude to them, merely as an apology for those defects of method, which are the natural, and perhaps the unavoidable, consequences of the frequent interruptions by which the train of my thoughts has been diverted to other pursuits. Such of my readers as are able to judge how very large a proportion of my materials has been

the fruit of my own meditations ; and who are aware of the fugitive nature of our reasonings concerning phenomena so far removed from the perceptions of Sense, will easily conceive the difficulty I must occasionally have experienced, in deciphering the short and slight hints on these topics, which I had committed to writing at remote periods of my life ; and still more, in recovering the thread which had at first connected them together in the order of my researches.

I have repeatedly had occasion to regret the tendency of this intermitted and irregular mode of composition, to deprive my speculations of those advantages, in point of continuity, which, to the utmost of my power, I have endeavoured to give them. But I would willingly indulge the hope, that this is a blemish more likely to meet the eye of the author than of the reader ; and I am confident, that the critic who shall honor me with a sufficient degree of attention, to detect it where it may occur, will not be inclined to treat it with an undue severity.

A Third Volume (of which the chief materials are already prepared) will comprehend all that I mean to publish under the title of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*. The principal subjects allotted for it are Language ; Imitation ; the Varieties of Intellectual Character ; and the Faculties by which Man is distinguished from the lower animals. The two first of these articles belong, in strict propriety, to this second part of my work ; but the size of the Volume has prevented me from entering on the consideration of them at present.

The circumstances which have so long delayed the publication of these volumes on the Intellectual Powers, have not operated, in an equal degree, to prevent the prosecution of my inquiries into those principles of Hu-

man Nature, to which my attention was, for many years, statedly and forcibly called by my official duty. Much, indeed, still remains to be done in maturing, digesting, and arranging many of the doctrines which I was accustomed to introduce into my lectures ; but if I shall be blessed, for a few years longer, with a moderate share of health and of mental vigor, I do not altogether despair of yet contributing something, *in the form of Essays*, to fill up the outline which the sanguine imagination of youth encouraged me to conceive, before I had duly measured the magnitude of my undertaking with the time or with the abilities which I could devote to the execution.

The volume which I now publish is more particularly intended for the use of Academical Students ; and is offered to them as a guide or assistant, at that important stage of their progress when, the usual course of discipline being completed, an inquisitive mind is naturally led to review its past attainments, and to form plans for its future improvement. In the prosecution of this design, I have not aimed at the establishment of new theories ; far less have I aspired to the invention of any new *organ* for the discovery of truth. My principal object is to aid my readers in unlearning the scholastic errors which, in a greater or less degree, still maintain their ground in our most celebrated seats of learning ; and by subjecting to *free*, but I trust, not *sceptical* discussion, the more enlightened though discordant systems of modern Logicians, to accustom the understanding to the unfettered exercise of its native capacities. That several of the views opened in the following pages appear to myself original, and of some importance, I will not deny ; but the reception these may meet with, I shall regard as a matter of comparative indifference, if my labors be found useful in training the mind to those

habits of reflection on its own operations, which may enable it to superadd to the instructions of the schools, that higher education which no schools can bestow.

Kinneil-House, 22d November, 1813.

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PART SECOND.

OF REASON, OR THE UNDERSTANDING PROPERLY SO CALLED; AND THE
VARIOUS FACULTIES AND OPERATIONS MORE IMMEDIATELY CONNECTED
WITH IT.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE VAGUENESS AND AMBIGUITY OF
THE COMMON PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE RELATIVE TO THIS PART OF
OUR CONSTITUTION,—REASON AND REASONING,—UNDERSTANDING,—
INTELLECT,—JUDGMENT, &c.

THE power of Reason, of which I am now to treat, is unquestionably the most important by far, of those which are comprehended under the general title of Intellectual. It is on the right use of this power, that our success in the pursuit both of knowledge and of happiness depends; and it is by the exclusive possession of it that Man is distinguished, in the most essential respects, from the lower animals. It is, indeed, from their subserviency to its operations, that the other faculties, which have been hitherto under our consideration, derive their chief value.

In proportion to the peculiar importance of this subject are its extent and its difficulty;—both of them such as to lay me under a necessity, now that I am to enter on the discussion, to contract, in various instances, those designs in which I was accustomed to indulge myself, when I looked forward to it from a distance. The execution of them at present, even if I were more competent to the task, appears to me, on a closer examination,

to be altogether incompatible with the comprehensiveness of the general plan which was sketched out in the advertisement prefixed to the former volume; and to the accomplishment of which I am anxious, in the first instance, to direct my efforts. If that undertaking should ever be completed, I may perhaps be able afterwards to offer additional illustrations of certain articles, which the limits of this part of my work prevent me from considering with the attention which they deserve. I should wish in particular, to contribute something more than I can here introduce, towards a rational and practical system of Logic, adapted to the present state of human knowledge, and to the real business of human life.

“What subject,” says Burke, “does not branch out to infinity! It is the nature of our particular scheme, and the single point of view in which we consider it, which ought to put a stop to our researches.”* How forcibly does the remark apply to all those speculations which relate to the principles of the Human Mind!

I have frequently had occasion, in the course of the foregoing disquisitions, to regret the obscurity in which this department of philosophy is involved, by the vagueness and ambiguity of words; and I have mentioned, at the same time, my unwillingness to attempt verbal innovations, wherever I could possibly avoid them, without essential injury to my argument. The rule which I have adopted in my own practice is, to give to every faculty and operation of the mind its own appropriate name; following, in the selection of this name, the *prevalent* use of our best writers; and endeavouring afterwards, as far as I have been able, to employ each word *exclusively*, in that acceptation in which it has hitherto been used *most generally*. In the judgments which I have formed on points of this sort, it is more than probable that I may sometimes have been mistaken: but the mistake is of little consequence, if I myself have invariably annexed the same meaning to the same phrase;—an accuracy which I am not so presumptuous as to im-

* Conclusion of the Inquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful.

agine that I have uniformly attained, but which I am conscious of having, at least, uniformly attempted. How far I have succeeded, they alone who have followed my reasonings with a very critical attention are qualified to determine ; for it is not by the statement of formal definitions, but by the habitual use of precise and appropriate language, that I have endeavoured to fix in my reader's mind the exact import of my expressions.

In appropriating, however, particular words to particular ideas, I do not mean to censure the practice of those who may have understood them in a sense different from that which I annex to them ; but I found that, without such an appropriation, I could not explain my notions respecting the human mind, with any tolerable degree of distinctness. This scrupulous appropriation of terms, if it can be called an *innovation*, is the only one which I have attempted to introduce ; for in no instance have I presumed to annex a philosophical meaning to a technical word belonging to this branch of science, without having previously shown, that it has been used in the same sense by good writers, in some passages of their works. After doing this, I hope I shall not be accused of affectation, when I decline to use it in any of the other acceptations in which, from carelessness or from want of precision, they may have been led occasionally to employ it.

Some remarkable instances of vagueness and ambiguity in the employment of words, occur in that branch of my subject of which I am now to treat. The word *reason* itself is far from being precise in its meaning. In common and popular discourse, it denotes that power by which we distinguish truth from falsehood, and right from wrong ; and by which we are enabled to combine means for the attainment of particular ends. Whether these different capacities are, with strict logical propriety, referred to the same power, is a question which I shall examine in another part of my work ; but that they are all included in the idea which is generally annexed to the word *reason*, there can be no doubt ; and the case, so far as I know, is the same with the cor-

responding term in all languages whatever. The fact probably is, that this word was first employed to comprehend the principles, whatever they are, by which man is distinguished from the brutes; and afterwards came to be somewhat limited in its meaning, by the more obvious conclusions concerning the nature of that distinction, which present themselves to the common sense of mankind. It is in this enlarged meaning that it is opposed to *instinct* by Pope :

“And Reason raise o’er Instinct as you can :
In this ’t is God directs, in that ’t is Man.”

It was thus, too, that Milton plainly understood the term, when he remarked, that smiles imply the exercise of reason :

“..... Smiles from Reason flow,
To brutes denied :”.....

And still more explicitly in these noble lines :

“There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done ; a creature who, not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of REASON, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing ; and from thence,
Magnanimous, to correspond with Heaven ;
But, grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends, thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works.”

Among the various characteristics of humanity, the power of devising means to accomplish ends, together with the power of distinguishing truth from falsehood, and right from wrong, are obviously the most conspicuous and important ; and accordingly it is to these that the word *reason*, even in its most comprehensive acceptance, is now exclusively restricted.*

* This, I think, is the meaning which most naturally presents itself to common readers, when the word *reason* occurs in authors not affecting to aim at any nice logical distinctions ; and it is certainly the meaning which must be annexed to it, in some of the most serious and important arguments in which it has ever been employed. In the following passage, for example, where Mr. Locke contrasts the light of Reason with that of Revelation, he plainly proceeds on the supposition, that it is