

The task was undertaken with an unfeigned distrust of my own powers, which nothing could have conquered but the conviction that a simple enumeration, and development of the principles on which the system is founded, would force a conviction of their truth.

It has been prosecuted with laborious and unremitting application for several years, with a respectful attention to the opinions of others, and a close observation of practical results.

Its conclusion was attended with the gratifying consciousness of having taken every precaution to guard against the pride of opinion, and neglected no means that could be suggested by the deepest sense of its importance, and a religious desire that it might advance private happiness, by establishing the true principles of public justice.

And it is now respectfully offered for consideration, in the hope that after Legislative wisdom shall have supplied the omissions, and corrected the errors of the work, it may be made the basis of a system by which instruction may be promoted, idleness and vice repressed, crimes diminished, and the sum of human happiness increased.

EDWARD LIVINGSTON.