

terial world, to account for their causes ; so, for the purpose of affording a true delineation of human nature, we must carefully investigate the actions of men. Thus, upon a principle proved by universal experience, "that every effect is produced by a cause," the active powers have been thoroughly examined, and accurately stated, in some of our modern systems of moral philosophy.

It has, however, always been the ruling disposition of lovers of simplicity, to reject any thing which appears complicated and abstruse, as palpably absurd ; and to adhere to some favorite hypothesis, which, from its mere simplicity, has gained approbation. Actuated by this disposition, philosophical speculators have endeavoured to reduce the principles of action to one unconnected source, without sufficiently considering that opposite effects cannot be produced by the same cause. This inordinate love of simplicity, is often the subterfuge of those who wish to present some new theory to the world ; and it often induces them to adopt causes, which are insufficient to explain the phenomena, while, upon the authority of the supposed undeviating simplicity of nature, they exulting exclaim, "*Frustra fit per plura quod fieri potest pauciora.*" But from a superficial or contracted view of human conduct, how absurd is it to conclude, that the principles of action are not as varied as the distinguishing effects of their operations. Can sweet and bitter water flow from the same fountain ; or can appearances so distinct in their nature as those which are derivable from the operations of love and revenge, be referred to the same principle of action ? Modify that principle under whatever appellation you please, give it the title of selfishness or aspiration after happiness, call it universal love or benevolence, a thousand difficulties must be encountered, and the principles of pure reason in a thousand instances violated, before a conclusion so erroneous can be formed. It was a principle of the illustrious Newton in philosophizing, that "no causes shall be admitted but such as are both true and sufficient to account for the phenomena." If this rule were more frequently and strictly observed, there would be more uniformity of sentiment among mankind, and far less paradoxical reasoning. But a propensity to analogical argument, and to the establishment of some general law, comprehending a variety of principles which have barely a fancied resemblance, is the cause