

nations." Under this comprehensive title are included the rules of morality as they prescribe the conduct of private men towards each other in all the various relations of human life; as they regulate both the obedience of citizens to the laws and the authority of the magistrate in forming laws and administering government; and as they modify the intercourse of independent commonwealths in peace, and prescribe limits to their hostility in war. This important science comprehends only that part of private ethics which is capable of being reduced to fixed and general rules. It considers only those general principles of jurisprudence and politics which the wisdom of the lawgiver adapts to the peculiar situation of his own country, and which the skill of the statesman applies to the more fluctuating and infinitely varying circumstances which affect its immediate welfare and safety. "For there are in nature certain founts of justice whence all civil laws are derived, but as streams; and like as waters do take tinctures and tastes from the soils through which they run, so do civil laws vary according to the regions and governments where they are planted, though they proceed from the same fountains." *

On the great questions of morality, of politics, and of municipal law, it is the object of this science to deliver only those fundamental truths of which the particular application is as extensive as the whole private and public conduct of men;—to discover those "fountains of justice" without pursuing the "streams" through the endless variety of their course. But another part of the subject is to be treated with greater fulness and minuteness of application; namely, that important branch of it which professes to regulate the relations and intercourse of states, and more especially (both on account of their greater perfection and their more immediate reference to use) the regulations of that intercourse as they are modified by the usages of the civilized nations of Christendom. Here this science no longer rests on general principles. That province of it which we now call the "law of nations," has, in many of its parts, acquired among European ones much of the precision and certainty of positive law; and the particulars of that law are chiefly to be found in the works of those writers who have treated the science of which I now speak. It is because they have classed, in a manner which seems peculiar to modern times, the duties of individuals with those of nations, and established their obligations on similar grounds, that this science has been called "the law of nature and nations."

* Bacon's "Advancement of Learning."