

believing in them, nor does any doubt affect them which would not equally affect our sensations, respecting which we cannot admit doubt. If, then, we could be sure in each case of having communicated to us the sensations experienced by fellow-men and nothing more, the sources of error would be limited indeed, and we might place an almost implicit reliance upon testimony. Why, then, do we not do so? Why do we believe at all if not to the fullest extent? What are the principles which should reasonably guide us on the subject, since universal scepticism would be manifest folly and would stop all the pursuits of life, and to believe or reject according to momentary fancy would be quite as unjustifiable? Some tell us that we believe in testimony by instinct, and learn to modify and regulate our belief by experience. I cannot think the use of the term instinct proper in such a connection, but it seems to be true that our first tendency is to believe testimony and not less so that experience wisely used regulates without destroying this belief. The primary and natural purpose of language is to communicate our states of mind to others, making known our wants and desires, our hopes and fears, and as it were transferring to them our sensations and thoughts, either through sympathy or as affording reasons for their acting according to our wishes. Where there is no strong purpose to the contrary, we speak truth naturally, and because our own words are intended to convey our perceptions, feelings and desires, and we all hear from others a great deal more truth than falsehood we are as naturally disposed to believe: but because where there is no moral control in the mind, selfishness would dispose to falsehood, and we all find ourselves occasionally deceived; a certain amount of distrust is gradually created by observation of what passes around us. There are also other sources of difficulty: testimony ordinarily communicates, not single sensations or definite clusters of them, which would leave little room for doubt or confusion in the mind of the witness, but series of successive events which were hastily viewed from one point of view and which would be rendered obscure either by his indifference or his agitation of mind; frequently too sufficient time has elapsed to admit of a partial fading of the events from the memory, whilst in an attempt to recall them, supposing no intention to deceive, desire and emotion would modify the result, giving colour to the narration. We may easily observe in our own minds the difference there is in clearness of revival between a