

The unchangeable character of their Author is stamped upon all his works. That uniformity, that resemblance to itself which exists in the works of nature through all times, climates and circumstances, must excite the most agreeable emotions of astonishment in every reflecting mind. The bee is the emblem of industry and skill now as it was thousands of years ago; the ant of prudence; the dove and the lamb of innocence; the eagle is still noted for its lofty flight and carnivorous habits; the lion and tiger for ferocity; the ox, the horse, the cow and the sheep, serve the same purposes still for man; the germination and growth of the plant is still the same; day and night; seed time and harvest; the earth for thousands of years teeming with the same animate existences and with food for their support; the unchanging aspect of the heavens; that divine order and harmony in their revolutions, so perfect that no one body amongst the countless millions of orbs ever impinged upon another; no part of the vast machinery ever goes wrong; the sun for so many ages the source of light and heat to his attendant worlds, rises with the same ruddiness, ascends the heavens with the same majesty, and shines with the same brilliancy, as upon that morn when "God said let there be light," "and the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy." Every truth already known, every observed fact, may lead to undiscovered truth, and to principles having the most important bearing upon the destinies of man.

The influence of sciences upon morals remains to be briefly considered. If the comparative influence of knowledge and ignorance upon morals and religion, were subjects admitting of discussion, they would give rise to questions of the weightiest importance. For if ignorance be favourable to virtue, then, the grosser the ignorance, the more powerful the virtuous influence; if ignorance be favourable to virtue or promotes it, then it is unfortunate that man is created with a thirst for knowledge, and powers capable of knowing and understanding the works of his Creator; it is unfortunate that from the cradle to the grave his knowledge must increase; then truly God's ways are not equal" in so constituting us that we must necessarily grow wiser; better that we are doomed to be idiots. But this supposition is absurd and leads to absurd consequences. There can be no virtue or religion without knowledge. Virtue, in its highest sense, is an *intelligent* observance of the divine law. Virtue is not passive but active; it is not a blind or unconscious performance of the right. There must be a knowledge of the way; knowledge of the relations between man and man, and between man and his Maker, and of the obligations arising out of such relations. It is nevertheless true that there is not always a fixed proportion between intellectual and moral growth. Distinguished talents and high attainments are sometimes connected with obliquity of character. The intellectual powers may be unduly developed to the neglect of the moral; but the strengthening of some faculties does not weaken those which lie dormant. The whole being would be fully and equally developed—mental,

moral and physical,—and each would exercise a favourable influence over the others. The opinion that learning is unfavourable to morals and religion, or from the character of the French philosophers. But causes which time would fail to point out, had subverted the foundations of virtue and piety in France; of these the corruption of true religion was the most powerful. But their immorality and infidelity were not produced by their philosophy, but in spite of it. In France there was no general diffusion of knowledge, no correct religious instruction, no wholesome public opinion; the press and the pulpit were corrupt. "Darkness covered the land and gross darkness the people." But we cannot reason from isolated facts. The question concerns general influences and general tendencies. It must be argued from man's constitution and the constitution of the works of God around him; from the nature of virtue and the nature of knowledge; and from the history of individuals and of nations. That learning is unfavourable to morality or religion, none would assert. The question, if any there be, is whether learning exerts a direct influence upon morality and religion, and to what extent. And if that influence be propitious, then the more comprehensive and varied the knowledge, the more powerful the virtuous influence. "A little learning" says Pope "is a dangerous thing;—shallow draughts intoxicate the brain." Pope's poetry is better than his philosophy. No knowledge, however small, of the works and ways of Providence, can be detrimental. Knowledge, it is true, is not virtue, although virtue presupposes knowledge. But they cannot be separated. Both are attributes of the only perfect Being, towards whom his intelligent creatures are designed even to tend. His wisdom, as well as his goodness, is a pattern—a glorious pattern;—for our imitation. We can study the Great Architect in every part of the gorgeous and stupendous temple of the universe, as we can study the skill of the architect in St. Paul's or St. Peter's Cathedrals of modern times, or in the Pantheon or Mausoleum, in the temples of Apollo, or Diana, or that of the eternal God at Jerusalem, or the Pyramids of ancient times. God has spread around us subjects of contemplation with all the profusion of infinite wisdom, and when the mind is lost in the contemplation of the distant, the great, the incomprehensible, it can return and contemplate its own frame, curiously and mysteriously wrought in the deep recesses of nature by the hand Divine. Man is not like the beasts that perish. His better part is not to return to the dust. It is a spark of that Divine intelligence, a ray of Divinity, by which and through which he bears a resemblance to the Eternal. Man is formed to think, and reason and will. He can survey God in his primeval works, contemplate him in his Providence, and rejoice with him in his love. Knowledge unseals the book of nature and leads man to an acquaintance with its author. As he turns its pages, every line bears the traces of Infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. In the creation and preservation of the world he beholds the display of Divine power; in every part of it he sees the perfect adaptation of means to the accom-