

account he gives of the object of his treatise is so concise and clear that it must be quoted, for the understanding of his position :—

"I thought that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries the mind of man was very apt to run into, was to take a view of our own understandings ; examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted. Till that was done, I suspected we began at the wrong end, and in vain sought for satisfaction in a quiet and sure possession of truths. That most concerned us, whilst we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of being, as if all that boundless extent were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions, or that escaped its comprehension. Thus, men extending their inquiries beyond their capacities, and letting their thoughts wander into those depths where they can find no sure footing, it is no wonder that they raise questions and multiply disputes, which, never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and to confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas, were the capacities of our understandings well considered, the extent of our knowledge once discovered, and the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things, between what is and what is not comprehensible by us, men would, perhaps, with less scruple, acquiesce in the avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourse with more advantage and satisfaction in the other."—Locke, "Of the Human Understanding," Chap. L., p. 133, Bohn's Ed.

This important paragraph shews clearly the tendency of Locke, to clear his ground, like Bacon, so as to make a completely new starting point available. Just as Bacon appeared to anticipate absolute certainty, as the result of carrying out his principles, so Locke seems to expect that "the capacities of our understandings well-considered, the extent of our knowledge once discovered, men would be quite satisfied to forbear launching out 'into the vast ocean of being,' and cease to pry into those things that are, or are considered 'unknowable.'"

The essay on the human understanding—about which a few words must be said—was published near the close of the seventeenth century. In it Locke puts forth and defends two propositions :—

- (1). That there are no innate ideas.
- (2). That all knowledge springs from experience.

The Intellect he compared to a blank leaf, upon which observation of outward phenomena makes certain impressions, and further reflection thereupon gives birth to ideas. This Essay was subjected to many attacks from those who saw what consequences might flow from the development of his theory. Bishop Hillingfleet was amongst the most notable of these. But on the other hand he found defenders from amongst the clergy.

Locke himself was probably a Christian, and he actually wrote in defence of Christianity, but the argument of his Essay, viewed from one standpoint, was decidedly influential against Christianity. The materialistic aspect of the Essay was rapidly taken up and developed to its utmost limits. Locke derived knowledge from sensation and reflection, but there were not wanting followers to unite the two, to speak of reflection itself as a kind of sensation. To such there exists nothing but the sensible world, i.e., matter. We cannot see, hear, touch, taste or smell anything else, therefore nothing else exists. Nor indeed is there necessity for anything else. All that man needs for his life, that is for the satisfaction of the senses, he finds in the world around him. When he dies his body corrupts and moulders to dust, and as that entails the destruction of the senses, so of necessity it is the end of man. Since matter only exists, there is no God. Nor again is there any necessity for one. Matter contains within it the necessary potentiality for developing phenomena. In our own days philosophers superadd to matter a mysterious Force, which is the Author of Law, and the cause of all the changing phenomena of sense. The arguments in favor of Materialism have, it is thought, received a great stimulus from the elaboration of the Darwinian theory of Evolution. By it the existence of different gems and species is explained, so that the old argument of special creation of each is overcome. But the Doctrine of Evolution is now held by many who are by no means Materialists, and it is only by falling back upon unverified hypotheses that it can be entirely materialized.

Such has been the development of Materialism. In its last and most negative stage it becomes Atheism. It is not, however, just to charge Locke with responsibility for this last result, any more than it is to charge Bacon with responsibility for the darker side of the results of Scientific investigation ; but it cannot be denied that as the latter is the founder of Modern Science, so the former is the founder of Modern Materialism.

The antithesis of the Philosophy of Locke, in its most Materialistic development, was in our own country maintained by Berkeley. The tendency of Empiricism was, as has been seen, to materialize mind, to make it a mere resultant of sensation. The tendency of Idealism is to take an opposite course, and so instead of resulting in the materialization of spirit, arrives at last at the Spiritualization of matter. The Sensualists cried, "There is nothing but matter!" "Nay," replied the Idealists, "There is nothing but spirit!" This latter extreme result was not reached directly any more than the former. A more moderate form of Idealism is connected with the name of the great German, Leibnitz. As opposed to Locke, Berkeley maintained with much earnestness and ability that our ideas are not derived from the material world, which has indeed no real existence, but from God Himself. The things we see and touch have no existence