

he represented them to his disciples as animated by souls which had previously acted a part in human bodies, and for that reason, enjoined them to treat those their humbler brethren with gentleness and humanity, and to beware of ever shedding their blood. The same opinion still prevails through the East; and it has actually such influence on the manners of the Gentoos, that they will perish of hunger, rather than shed the blood, or eat the flesh of an animal.

This opinion, indeed, as well as that which degrades the brutes to the humble character of pieces of mere mechanism, may probably have originated from prejudice or careless observation. But, since natural history has begun to be more diligently cultivated, many observations have been made on the manners and oeconomy of the inferior animals, which prove, that, if they are guided by instinct, that instinct is by no means a mechanical principle of action, but, in its nature and susceptibility of improvement, often approaches nearly to the character of human reason. The manners of no one species among the brutes are uniformly the same in all the individuals belonging to it. Even in performing those actions in which they are said to be guided by unvarying instinct, different individuals display different modes of conduct. It is probable, that if we were to examine their manners and oeconomy with the same minute and careful attention with which we observe the conduct of our own species, we should find those of their actions which we call *instinctive*, much more diversified than we imagine: the general resemblance, the family likeness, would, no doubt, still hold; but we should surely discover the character of the individuals to be distinctly marked, as well as that of the species. The laws of analogical reasoning do not justify the idea, that the brutes act, on any occasion, absolutely without design. On many occasions, they undeniably act with design; the dog obeys his master; he traces his footsteps, in order to overtake him; he even attempts to make returns of gratitude for the kindness with which he is treated. Others of the inferior animals behave in a similar manner. It seems, therefore, more probable, the inferior animals, even in those instances in which we cannot distinguish the motives which actuate them, or the views with which they proceed, act not altogether without design, and extend their views, if not a great way, yet at least

a certain length forward,—than that they can be, upon any occasion, such as in rearing their young, building their nests, &c. actuated merely by feeling, or over-ruled by some mysterious influence, under which they are nothing but insensible instruments.

The facts from which this induction is drawn, have of late forced themselves on observation, in such a manner as to give rise to a very curious theory.* It has been thought better to degrade mankind nearer to the same level with the brutes, than to elevate the brutes to the rank usually assigned to mankind. The human mind has been represented as a bundle of instincts, only a little larger than those bundles of the same materials which have been bestowed on the brutes. Observing, that the inferior animals seemed, on many occasions, to act upon the same principles with mankind, and unwilling to allow that the former can act with design, the author of this theory has contrived to explain the phenomena, by denying design to his own species.

But we will not tamely surrender our rights. It is better to share them with others, than to be entirely deprived of them. We are conscious of comparing ideas, and of forming designs. If these operations are called instincts,—very well: this is not to advance a new doctrine, but to propose the use of new terms.—Yet those already in use seem sufficiently adequate to the purposes for which they are employed. Let mankind still be allowed to reason, and to act with design; even though it must be granted, that the brutes too reason, but not so skillfully, and form designs, but designs much less extensive than those of mankind.

We not only accomplish such purposes as we propose to ourselves, by the use of such means as prudence suggests, but we are also subject to laws, by the influence of which our conduct, whatever it be, naturally produces certain effects on our character and circumstances, which we neither previously desired nor foresaw. The drunkard, for instance, sits down easily to swallow a liquor of which he is fond, or to join in that noisy mirth which reigns among his fellows; but he insensibly acquires a habit which he did not think of, and by indulging in that habit, unintentionally produces very unhappy changes on his health and circumstances.—The benevolent man, in the same manner, when he intercedes to relieve his brother in distress,

* See Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol. I. p. 39, to 45.