

in the intellect which was not previously in the senses ; that is to say, that no idea can enter the mind through any other avenues than those of the senses ; that no state of consciousness can be induced but by or through the medium of the external senses, nervous system, and brain. This is the grand proposition, which had, indeed, been stated and confirmed, to some extent, by the ancient philosophers in by-gone ages ; but it was reserved for an Englishman in the 17th century so to propose it, and so to surround it with Lemma, Corollary, and Scholium, as to render it for ever impregnable. It is, moreover, written in such clear and direct terms that none but those who are wilfully and obstinately perverse, or who are interested in the propagation and support of error, can even pretend to object or deny.

This portion (namely, the first book, and the first and second chapters of the second book) is decidedly the masterpiece of the Essay. Had Locke written nothing more, it would have sufficed to place his name in the highest rank of philosophers. The subsequent chapters (though generally excellent) are by no means of so high a character ; many of them still only occupy debatable ground ; and in a few instances he is inconsistent with himself, and appears to be even absolutely self-contradictory. Having made so bold an assertion, it will be indispensable that I should prove it, in order to avoid the charge of excessive presumption.

In Book II, chapter 23, he says :—" We can't conceive anything but impulse of body can move body ; and yet that is not a sufficient reason to make us deny it possible, against the constant experience we have of it in ourselves, in all voluntary motions which are produced in us, only by the free action or thought of our minds ; and are not, nor can be, the effects of the impulse or determination of the motion of blind matter in or upon our bodies, for then it could not be in our power or choice to alter it. For instance, my right hand writes while my left hand is still,—what causes motion in one and rest in the other ? Nothing but my will—a thought of my mind. My thought only changing, the right hand *rests*, and the left