

to an equal share of the means of comfort. Nature's will decrees that disobedient children shall not be, in themselves, capable of happiness in the same degree as others, or have the like means; and those who are very refractory she sometimes disinherits, or, in other words, sends them out of her dominions into another world. But the heirs themselves have no right to withhold from one another, that portion which each is capable of enjoying. The rich, therefore, who are merely Trustees, in addition to being co-heirs with the others, have no right to withhold from the poor, anything which tends to their comfort. Consequently charity is only an act of justice. Now what has been proved of charity, must hold good of every other kind of benevolence: *Ergo, benevolence, under all its forms, is nothing but justice*:—which was to be proved.

This extension of the principle of justice to all those actions which go by the name of disinterested, generous, &c., may be also deduced from an article in Nature's will, constituting every heir an executor. The purport of that will, is, as already stated, to give to each that portion of comfort which he is capable of enjoying. Now we do not consider it a work of supererogation for an executor to fulfil the intention of the testator; it is his bounden duty. So, whatever a man may do for the good of others, let him not dream of disinterestedness and other supposed merits; he is only doing what it would be unjust not to do.

Under a sense, therefore, of deep responsibility for this trust, I proceed to do an act of justice to a portion of the creation, in a matter in which I have no farther interest, than what arises from my being one of Nature's executors. I confess that, had it not presented itself to me in the form of a duty of justice, I doubt much if I should ever have been led to engage in it from what are called, in vanity, the *finer feelings*. But as it is, it is surely a convincing proof of my great self-denial, thus to state my motives, seeing what reputation I might have acquired, if I had allowed the world to continue in the delusion. I cannot help fancying my name handed down to posterity along with those of Hercules, and Don Quixote, and a host of Knights errant and modern beaus, who have devoted their lives to the protection and service of the weaker sex.

For, to come at once to the point, I aver, that the tyrant man, not content with usurping domestic rule, has unjustly withheld from the fair sex, the credit of an invention in the arts which has conferred incalculable benefits upon the human race. I allude to Sir Humphrey Davy's Safety Lamp!* It is generally

known that the merit of discovering the principle of the instrument, was claimed by a Newcastle workman of the name of Stephenson, if I remember rightly. Whatever might be the merits of that dispute, I am afraid Sir Humphrey's laurels are in greater danger from another quarter; for if it can be shown that the ladies have a claim to the discovery, their pretensions are likely to receive more attention than those of the collier. How then does the matter stand?

In an essay, with which I may some day oblige the world, I have shown, to my own satisfaction, that the essence of mind pervades all matter in a latent or insensible state, but becomes sensible only in the human frame; just as electricity exists in each of the plates composing a galvanic pile, although its presence is not felt until the pieces are put together in a certain way. The human body then, is a kind of electric machine; and as substances charged with electricity have around them what scientific men call an electrical atmosphere, so the mind, or mental electricity, is not confined to the body, but extends all around it in an invisible halo. Now, electricity and similar agents are the very essence of fire. A mental atmosphere is therefore inflammable; not, to be sure, by means of common flame, but by rays of mind concentrated into a focus. Here then is a world of mischief, if a spark fall among it.

And here I cannot help paying a tribute of praise to the ancients for their sagacity. It is commonly fabled that Prometheus stole fire from Heaven, and was punished for his sacrilege by receiving as a gift the first woman that ever lived on earth. But this way of telling the story is the blunder of some dull emendator. It was the lady herself that Prometheus stole, and the ancients had the sagacity to see that she brought with her the principle of mental conflagration; so that Prometheus really stole fire and burnt his fingers with the booty.

The fact is, that the glances of female eyes are nothing but so many mental foci, the rays of mind

subjoin the following from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.—ED. L. G.

"In many of the collieries of Britain, Flanders, and other countries, fire-damp, consisting of carburetted hydrogen, issues from different parts of the strata of coal, when the coal is worked; and when the fire-damp is mixed with a certain proportion of atmospheric air, it explodes by the flame of a miner's candle, burning the workmen severely, and often depriving them of life. The merit of that very ingenious and most useful contrivance, the Safety Lamp, is wholly due to Sir Humphrey Davy. After having made many experiments, for the purpose of forming a lamp to give light in coal mines affected with fire-damp, without occasioning explosions, he found that wire gauze offered a perfect barrier; because, although the gas was inflamed within the enclosure formed by the wire-gauze, yet the heat being communicated to the numerous surfaces of the wire, the gas on the outside of the wire enclosure was not inflamed."

* As some of our readers may not be so familiar with Sir Humphrey Davy's Safety Lamp as our friend the Critic seems to take for granted, in order to make the point of his essay more intelligible, we