
FIRST TRUTHS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

Ch.
PERE *B U F F I E R.*

FIRST TRUTHS,

A N D T H E

ORIGIN OF OUR OPINIONS,

E X P L A I N E D:

W I T H

A N E N Q U I R Y

Into the Sentiments of

MODERN PHILOSOPHERS,

Relative to our primary Ideas of Things.

TRANSLATED FROM

The FRENCH of Pere *BUFFIER*.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A Detection of the Plagiarism, Concealment, and Ingratitude of the Doctors REID, BEATTIE, and OSWALD.

Render unto Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar's.

L O N D O N:

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P R E F A C E.

THAT human affairs are subject to a variety of revolutions, is an observation as long acknowledged, and as well founded, as any in the records of Literature; and this hath naturally arisen from the progression of sublunary transactions, and the inequality of those individuals who have conducted them. But that Philosophy, at once the parent and progeny of Truth, according to the general acceptation of the word, should have been the subject of eternal changing, would seem extraordinary and unnatural, were it not evinced by that fate which hath invariably attended every system that has hitherto appeared.

Truth hath been the ostensible object of pursuit by all of the numerous sects that have existed amongst mankind. Each hath professed to be animated by no other motive, and to seek no other end; and all have asserted their attainment of it respecting themselves, although at the same time

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they

they have denied it to all others. The doctrines of *Aristotle* and his followers, for ages, were received and propagated, as truths irrefragable, by the learned and philosophic, through all the schools of *Europe*. *Des Cartes* arose, and laid the foundation of a new system, in which he was followed by *Malbranche* in *France*. *Hobbes*, in his Treatises on Human Nature, and on Man, and *Locke*, in his Essay on the Human Understanding, the latter of whom was greatly and unconfessedly indebted to the former, extended the regions of this new philosophy, when *Aristotle* and his disciples seemed to be driven from the field, and truth was then supposed to be firmly established. At length a Man, the greatness and excentricity of whose genius exceeded that of the preceding ages, came forth, and attacked the systems of all his predecessors in philosophic researches: he even attempted to annihilate the very existence of matter, and to reduce all those objects that had been hitherto considered as substantial beings, to mere ideas; every thing external was proscribed, and all nature crowded within the brain of every individual.

At length the fallacy, at least the imperfection, of these systems of modern philosophy, began to be descried; and amongst those who have discovered the fallibility of them, no man has so signally and so justly distinguished himself as Father

ther *Buffier*, a character well known and greatly esteemed, among the learned Jesuits, for a variety of literary productions. Of these, his *First Principles of Truth* deservedly obtained the place of pre-eminence. It was his opinion, that not only the ancient, but even the modern philosophers above-named, have involved the subject of their enquiries in such abstruseness and difficulties, as demand too much reflexion to be understood by men of ordinary capacities. For this reason; he has endeavoured “to know truths in
 “ their very source; to analyse those to which we
 “ must ascend, in order to ascertain whatever
 “ is necessary to be proved; and which constitute
 “ the utmost boundary of human enquiry; to de-
 “ duce principles capable of dispelling the mist of
 “ vulgar prejudice, the perplexities of the schools,
 “ and the prepossessions even of certain learned
 “ and modish philosophers;” and to found the primary truths on Common Sense, of which the subsequent is the definition: “Common sense
 “ is that quality or disposition which nature has
 “ placed in all men, or evidently in the far
 “ greater number of them, in order to enable
 “ them all, when they have arrived at the age
 “ and use of reason, to form a common and
 “ uniform judgement; with respect to objects
 “ different from the internal sentiment of their
 “ own

“ own perception, and which judgement is not
“ the consequence of any interior principle.”

From the preceding definition, it is evident that this learned writer considers Common Sense, not like those senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, which perceive their objects by intuitive discernment; but as a quality or disposition of the mind, resulting from age and time, by which men experimentally arrive at the use of reason, and from meditation attain an ability of forming a common and uniform judgement, with respect to objects that are different from the internal sentiment, which evinces that they themselves exist, and that “ these first
“ truths are propositions so clear and obvious,
“ that they can neither be proved nor refuted
“ by other propositions,” because there are none to be adduced which are more perspicuous.

That this explanation coincides with the ideas of this celebrated writer, respecting common sense, is manifest from the examples he adduces, to signify his meaning: such as, “ there is some-
“ thing in other beings that is called truth, wis-
“ dom, prudence; and this something is not
“ merely arbitrary.” The discovery of these attributes, as existing in other men, is impossible to take place in the mind of any being which does not reflect on the sentiments, emotions, and actions of others; compare them with those of
himself.

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himself, examine the nature of the things themselves, and thence infer that they are the consequence of thinking justly, and acting rightly, which constitute the nature of truth, wisdom, and prudence, in the proceedings of mankind. Every example he brings, clearly evinces that those first truths, which are the objects of common sense, require experience and meditation to be conceived; and that the judgements thence derived are the result of exercising reason. In fact, what he understands by common sense and its perceptions, are evidently the same with that of common understanding, and its powers of discerning and of judging, which is given to almost all mankind; in contradistinction to that superior degree of reason, which is supposed to exist in such alone as exert it in the contemplation of objects abstruse, metaphysical, or remote from the general comprehension of mankind; and to that degree of imbecillity which precludes the capacity of examining things with due consideration. To this common sense, or common understanding, he appeals through all his treatise; and in all the instances which he adduces, he appears to have fairly and fully receded to such principles of truth as may deservedly be considered as primary, and which are adequate to all the purposes of that conviction which he derives from

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them,

them, and within the reach of such common intellects.

That the productions of men eminent in learning and science, were intended for the instruction of subsequent writers, who might bend their minds to the study of similar subjects, is what cannot be well called in question; and therefore those who succeed the former have a just right to the use of those discoveries which the preceding have produced, provided always they gratefully acknowledge from what source they have derived or improved their publications. But to come forth as authors, on the merits of other men, and to conceal the obligation, is not only a flagitious theft, and an injury to the dead, but an insult also on the understandings of the living.

Of later years the *Transtweedian* regions have swarmed with a new species of men, different from their itinerant pedlars in the wares they sell, but similar in the manner of packing them together from the labours of others: these are Writers, or rather Book-makers, “who obtain but
“ a mediocrity of knowledge between learning
“ and ignorance;” for such is the opinion of an author, whose abilities to judge, and whose candour in decision, deservedly place him above the suspicion of being inadequate or unjust in the sentence he has pronounced.

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Notwithstanding this first truth, and that genius is not a flower which blossoms in that hyperborean country, they are nevertheless as ambitious of literary distinction—as self-sufficient, arrogant, and contemptuous, as if learning and superior intellect were given to them alone—and as ungrateful as if their productions were unstolen, and of their own creation. They persevere in collecting materials from other authors, and, industrious to conceal their plagiarisms, compile and assume them as their own. By the ambition of being ranked among the learned of *Europe*, they are urged to search after subjects on which to employ their pens; by their self-sufficiency they are prompted to deem themselves equal to the most arduous undertakings in literature, and from thence their arrogance arises—By the mediocrity of their talents and acquirements, they are incapacitated from penetrating to the genuine conceptions of the authors which they read: at the same time being conversant, in their own country only, with men of less, or not of greater, intellects and learning than themselves, they are not encountered by those checks which result from the conversation of such men of superior powers and attainments as are to be found in the more enlightened regions of *Europe*; whilst the affectation of refining on the discoveries and sentiments of other writers, runs them

either into puerilities and absurdities, and into distinctions which afford no difference; or they form an envelope of words, which contains no precision nor arrangement of ideas, and effectually evinces, to those who will study them with attention, that they neither understand the authors they have quoted, nor themselves.

From an union of all these circumstances, they are naturally contemptuous, because they are ignorant of that which has been long known by men who are truly learned.

The author which I have translated will afford a signal example of the preceding truths; for, among the Scottish writers, there are those who in different degrees have clandestinely taken the principles and opinions of Pere *Buffier*, converted them to their own purposes of acquiring fame, and concealed the theft by ungratefully unacknowledging the person to whom they are obliged; and have spoiled, as far as they had abilities, his philosophy, either by not understanding what it contains, or by affecting a definition of common sense equally distant from that of this learned writer, and from truth itself.

Of these, Dr. *Reid*, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of *Glasgow*, is the foremost; for the title of his publication is, *An Enquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense*. Like Pere *Buffier*, he has attempted

attempted to shew the fallacies of *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, and *Berkley*, as philosophers: to these he has added *David Hume*, whom he has connected with *Berkley*, and says, “the present age, he apprehends, has not produced two more acute or more practised in this part of philosophy”; and then, in the subsequent page, as a proof of this acuteness in *Hume*, he proceeds upon the same principles with *Berkley*, and carries them to their full length. He stole his principles from the Bishop then, without acknowledgement. But it seems, “as the Bishop undid the whole material world, this author, upon the same grounds, undoes the world of spirits, and leaves nothing in nature but ideas and impressions, without any subject on which they may be impressed.” He must be an acute and well-practised philosopher indeed, who has undone the world of spirits, and supposed the existence of ideas *without a mind to contain them*, and left *impressions to be made upon nothing at all*; but being a Scotchman, like *Dr. Reid*, according to the Scottish doctrine of national partiality, though erroneous and unintelligible, he is still to be deemed acute and well-practised in philosophy; and thus the Professor, fancying that he has evinced the fallacy of *Hume*, has gratified the two strongest passions in the bosoms of the *Transtweedian* writers; the vanity which spontaneously

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neously springs from their native self-sufficiency, and visionary refinements on authors whom they do not understand, together with that uniform prevalence proceeding from national partiality.

Hume is indeed a Metaphysician of such subtilty, at least, that his *own* conceptions appear to have escaped the intelligence of himself. I have frequently analysed a multiplicity of his sentences, paragraphs, and pages: I have assiduously endeavoured to affix the properest idea to each word, and to consider the whole in all the points of view within my power; and yet without a possibility of comprehending his intention. Diffident of my own abilities, I have consulted men of distinguished eminence in metaphysical learning: these also have united in the previous conclusions. Of this fact I can adduce innumerable instances, that through his *Essays*, together with his usual unintelligibility, he has not only been guilty of introducing opinions which have no other tendency than that of levelling all distinction between virtue and vice, and of exterminating that supreme felicity which necessarily results from the exercise of religion and morality; but that he abounds with more flagrant self-contradictions than can be found in any writer whom I have read: for such is the truth, that men not only acquire reputation in metaphysical literature by the very means which would inevitably preclude it in
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all others, but they are more secure from the detection of that criticism which is generally within the reach of common understandings.

Metaphysical researches in their nature include a difficulty of being comprehended: the readers, therefore, of such productions, whenever they encounter a passage unintelligible in itself, are inclined to suppose it to have sprung from the abstruseness of the matter, and kindly impute to an insufficiency in themselves, the want of comprehending that which the author himself had never conceived with any degree of ideal precision, nor expressed with intelligible perspicuity; and thus the latter acquires the reputation of being extremely refined, and deep in the knowledge of his subject, and beyond his reader's reach of thought, when, in fact, he was only truly incomprehensible, and not to be fathomed either by himself or even the most extensive line of the human intellect.

Dr. Reid, in his Enquiry, has carefully avoided *literally* transcribing the passages relative to *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, and *Berkley*, and the observations on them, which are to be found in *Buffier*; but he has with no less care adopted his sense, and modestly assumed it as his own. He has considered the writings and philosophy of that great man as *treasure trouvé*, and abstained
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from delivering it to the person to whom it lawfully belongs.

In like manner, although he has told us in his title-page, that his enquiry is founded on the principles of common sense, yet has he in no part of it condescended to tell us in what these principles itself, and even common sense, consist; and whoever will attentively consider his work, and compare it with that of Pere *Buffier*, will certainly find that *Reid* has the greatest obligations to the learned Jesuit; that he has exerted much art in concealing what he has stolen, and afforded no satisfactory, or even any explanation of his ideas, concerning the principles of common sense. If his conception of common sense be any where to be found, it seems most probably to be in the subsequent passage, pag. 208 and 209.

“ The sensations of touching, of seeing, and
 “ hearing, are all in the mind, and can have no
 “ existence but when they are perceived. How
 “ do they all constantly and invariably suggest
 “ the conception and belief of external objects,
 “ which exist whether they are perceived or not?
 “ No philosopher can give any other answer to
 “ this, but that such is the constitution of our
 “ nature. How do we know that the object of
 “ feeling is at the finger’s end, and no where else;
 “ that the object of sight is in such a direction
 “ from the eye, and no other, but may be at any
 “ distance;

“ distance ; that the object of hearing may be at
“ any distance, and in any direction? Not by
“ custom, surely ; not by reasoning, or comparing
“ ideas ; but by the constitution of our nature, &c.”

What passage can well appear to be more destitute of common sense than the preceding, which is included in an enquiry said to be founded on the principles of common sense? For, according to this writer, it seems that reasoning, and comparing ideas, form *no part* of the constitution of our nature : and yet it is impracticable to assign any other causes, that the objects of touch, eye-sight, hearing, &c. have any distinction of place, or difference in distance, perceivable by these senses, but by the custom of reasoning upon, and comparing those degrees of force, from the slightest to the most powerful, in the respective objects of each sense. For, do we not know that an object is touched by the fingers *alone*, because, by comparing its affecting those, and no other parts of the body, we discern it is felt by them alone? By the custom of hearing all degrees of sound, from the least to the greatest ; of beholding objects, from the slightest degrees of visible perception to the strongest ; and, from the custom of comparing the differences which arise in them to the eye and ear, as we either approach or recede from each, we obtain the idea of distance : and, by reasoning upon them, do we not acquire
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the knowledge of deciding at what distances they respectively are? Is not the idea of space, in fact, obtained by the powers of loco-motion habitually exercised? For, were a man to remain with all his senses immoveable in the same place, from his birth to this minute, could he possibly acquire that idea? For, without the *custom* of moving over the surface of the earth, without reasoning, and comparing the objects as they varied to the senses, by proximity or recess, neither the eye, ear, fingers, nose, nor palate, could have conveyed an idea of distance to the mind.

But what explanation of the preceding circumstances, respecting the senses and their objects, can there be imparted by saying the latter are perceived, because "such is the constitution of our nature?" What does it imply more, than that, being constituted men by nature, we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, as men? Words which are absolutely unexplanatory of any means or effects. And what is the denying, that the knowledge of direction and distance are not attained either by custom, reasoning, or comparing our ideas, so well known, and so demonstratively ascertained, less than an egregious ignorance of the subject on which he presumes to treat? In fact, the preceding enquiry affords us a just and conspicuous exhibition of the *Scottish* manner of philosophising; and the passage on which

which it has been animadverted, is a fair specimen of all that is truly their own, of those Northern Book-makers. Whatever is to be found of genuine merit, real learning, and superior intellect, in their literary manufactures, is generally purloined and unacknowledged. Words which envelope a confusion of ideas, or that are unimparting any form, the sole part that can be fairly attributed to them. Notwithstanding this, the kindness of inadequate readers, which supposes them too profound for their capacities; when, in fact, they are truly unintelligible by themselves and all others, together with that national combination to extol the productions of their countrymen, however deficient, and to depreciate those of all others, however meritorious, have fallaciously forced too many of their publications into some degree of estimation; among which that of *Dr. Reid* may be justly considered.

The next, in order, of the three writers who are indebted to *Pere Buffier* for all that is contained of common sense in their productions, is *Dr. Oswald*, in his *Appeal to Common Sense in behalf of Religion*. *Dr. Reid* has made free with *Buffier* by taking his sense only, by conveying it in other terms than those of a regular translation, and by concealing the person whom he has plundered; but *Oswald* has not only adopted the sense of the French author, but rendered his ideas in a
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mere translation, and given them as his own; without acknowledging the obligation. In like manner, although he treats of First Truths, through his whole Appeal, in the sentiments of *Buffier*, in order to conceal the writer to whom he is obliged, he has not only given a title inexpressive of the idea of those first truths; but, by an unpardonable act of injustice to *Buffier*, of dishonour to himself, and of insult on his readers, he has given a passage from Mr. *Locke*, as it is adduced and answered by the learned *Frenchman*, and even quoted the latter as the author of it, under the title, *Remarks on Locke's Essay, by F. Buffier*; whereas no such essay ever had existence. The passage alluded to is contained in the treatise which I have translated; and the world cannot produce a more signal act of consciousness in theft, than his thus adducing a quotation from a work that never had a being, and changing the title of that on which he hath committed this literary felony, in order to escape the ignominy of detection. It resembles the cunning of the Welshman, who having stolen a cow, in order to avoid the discovery, should she be seen by the right owner at the place of sale, cut off her tail, and tied on another of a different colour; but the artifice was discovered, and the felon brought to condign punishment.

Like

derstanding in all things, to which the generality of mankind are capable of attaining by the exertion of their rational faculty.

Oswald hath chosen “to found the belief of “primary truths upon the authority of that simple perception and judgement of the rational mind, which *Mr. Locke* had overlooked in framing his hypothesis.” The judgement of a rational mind, upon simple perceptions, must inevitably be the conclusions of reasoning on those simple perceptions; or the term *rational* conveys no idea, and the perceptions and judgements on them must be the same thing, although the second is necessarily a mental operation on the first: this judgement, therefore, is an act of reasoning; and this is what *Mr. Locke* agrees in.

Pere Buffier has made his common sense, as it has been already observed, to be that degree of intelligence which men in general attain by age, and the use of reason; which is evidently this, that by time we arrive at the knowledge of an infinitude of things; and, by the use of reason, form our judgements on them: and that those judgements are then justly to be considered as *first truths*. The instances which are adduced, by the learned Jesuit, evince that this is his idea of common sense. “This maxim, says he, that “men ought to be faithful and just, is held by “all men.” Now it is certain, that the ideas of
faith-

faithfulness and justice can by no means be attained but by the exercise of reason on the actions of men, and the relations in which they stand respecting one another. By what means can faithfulness be known, before there has been either breach of trust, or of duty; or justice be conceived, before acts of violation and injury have been committed? And do not the ideas of faithfulness and justice spring from comparing the conduct of mankind, respecting those rights which they obtain from nature, and from thence inferring, by ratiocination, that difference in things which constitutes faithfulness and treachery, justice and injustice? Hence does it not evidently appear, according to *Buffier*, that, by reasoning on what we perceive, we arrive at such *first truths*, as are attainable by that degree of understanding, which is common to mankind who use their reason?

Oswald seems to conceive common sense to be a faculty distinct from reason, and not that degree of it which men of common capacities, by the exercise of reasoning, may easily acquire; and that the truth or reality of its objects are as *intuitively* discerned as those of colour, sound, flavour, hardness, odour, by the respective senses of which they are the objects; for, in page 71, he says: "In truth, if we have no original ideas
" of religion and virtue, and all our knowledge

“ of this kind must be gathered from abstractions,
 “ made by ourselves, such knowledge must needs
 “ be precarious.” But are not our ideas of vir-
 tue acquired by the same means of reasoning on
 our perceptions and actions, as those of faithful-
 ness and justice, and consist of abstractions drawn
 from our observations on the conduct of indivi-
 duals, and thence forming a complex idea of vir-
 tue absolutely detached from all particulars and
 personalities, and then acquiesced in, as truths, by
 that degree of understanding which the learned
 Jesuit distinguishes by the appellation of Common
 sense? And, although we are possessed of ori-
 ginal ideas of religion, in consequence of the ope-
 ration and energy of its doctrines and tenets, by
 the immediate perception of the faculty of faith,
 yet certainly no such ideas are attainable by
 common sense, without the exertion of reason:
 for the objects of faith are no more the objects of
common sense, than they are of the *sense* of seeing.

Again, page 191, he says: “ Along with the
 “ perception of hard, smooth, hot, cold, which
 “ we have by the sense of feeling, we get, and
 “ cannot avoid, the idea of something which is
 “ hot, cold, rough, or smooth; which something,
 “ being no object of sense, does not enter into
 “ the minds of idiots, and the lower animals.”

That men in their senses should conceive,
 that with the perceptions of hard, smooth, hot,
 gold,

cold, we should get the idea of something that is hot, cold, rough, or smooth, is certainly true, because these perceptions and ideas are one and the same: but that the ideas of cold, hot, rough, or smooth, should be something different from the perception of them, which is no object of sense, seems incapable of entrance into the mind of any but an idiot, or an inferior animal. The mind, indeed, in all these instances, from a multiplicity of experience on feeling objects possessed of the preceding properties, does, by abstraction, form an idea of hot, cold, hard, smooth, &c. independent of any specific object; but this is not an immediate perception by a faculty denominated Common sense, but one arising from the reflection of reason.

Again, he says, page 192, "By the external
 " organ of sight we have the same perception of
 " bodies in motion, which idiots, and the lower
 " animals have; but, by the intellectual sight,
 " we apprehend motion itself, which idiots and
 " the lower animals do not. Six billiard-balls
 " being placed in a line, we see not only the
 " impulse given to the first, and the motion per-
 " formed by the last; but we clearly perceive the
 " communication of motion from the first to the
 " last, and see, in a manner, motion run through
 " the whole." Now I would gladly know whe-
 " ther the impulse and communication of all this

motion are not ideas perceived by the organs of bodily sight, absolutely without the interference of an *intellectual sight*: or whether motion can be possibly conceived by any other means than by the organs of sense? All that can be intellectually obtained concerning the perceptions of motion, is an abstract idea of motion, derived from the perception of all degrees and modes of motion. Is it not therefore clear, from the preceding passages, that this Writer has been talking of that to which he has affixed no precision of idea; and, if he be deemed a deep philosopher in the opinion of others, that it is because he is unintelligible to himself?

In page 194, Dr. *Oswald* tells us, “there are
 “two orders or classes of perception: those, to
 “wit, we have in common with other animals,
 “and which we shall call *animal perceptions*; and
 “those peculiar to the rational kind, which shall
 “be called *rational perceptions*.” From the subsequent, and innumerable passages, it appears that, by the animal perceptions, he means those which are acquired by the senses of seeing, tasting, smelling, &c. and by *rational perceptions*,
 “things conveyed to the mind, by the help of
 “sensible objects, and which result from a due
 “attention to them; but, not being themselves
 “the objects of sense, they do not fall within the
 “sphere of idiots and lower animals, are objects
 “only

“ only of the rational mind ; and therefore the
“ ideas we have of them are fitly called *rational*
“ *perceptions.*”

To the preceding he adds : “ One cannot have
“ the idea of motion without once and again
“ attending to bodies in motion ; nor can you
“ have an idea of self-determination, without be-
“ ing well acquainted with the motions performed
“ by animals ; nor of the essential difference be-
“ tween virtue and vice, without understanding
“ and entering into the views and motives of the
“ agent.” All these, and a multiplicity of other
instances which he has adduced, incontrovertibly
prove that these *rational perceptions* are neither
different, nor any thing more than those ideas
obtained by the use of reason, and that judgement
which is derived from it by age ; and whatever
this Writer may assert, there is no distinction in
them, either real, important, or worthy the at-
tention of any one of those who look into the
human mind. From every instance it is evident,
that every perception, which he denominates real
to common sense, is nothing but that which all
mankind have hitherto conceived to be the re-
sult of reasoning on the objects which are offered
to the mind, and conclusions thence derived,
which are within the reach of the generality of
men who shall exert the energy of a common
understanding. In fact, this Writer seems to
have

have imagined that new names, applied to old ideas, bequeath a new manner of thinking; although he has not added a perception to the list which has been known for ages, nor a new mode of thinking to that which has been long exercised; at the same time it is evident, that his instances are either self-contradictory, or inconsistent with his notion of common sense; that he errs egregiously, if he supposes that he has held out new lights and new truths to mankind; and is unpardonable in his endeavours to conceal the name of that Author to whom he is so signally obliged for all that approaches to the merit of common sense.

Having thus examined, in a succinct and cursory manner, what has been advanced by *Reid* and *Oswald*, on the preceding subject, and sufficiently shewn their plagiarisms from *Pere Buffier*, and their ingratitude in concealing their obligations to him; I now proceed to *Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*.

This *Transtweedian* Writer has, in like manner, pillaged from the treasures of the learned Jesuit all that contains the least degree of merit through his whole production; and he has only mentioned his name, in a note, among those who have written on the subject of common sense. It has been already evinced, that the idea of *Pere Buffier*, respecting common sense, is—that it is that degree
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of judgement, which by time, and the use of reason, is attainable by the generality of mankind; or, which is precisely the same, that degree of reason which is common to those who may exert it on the various subjects that are brought before the mind.

But *Beattie*, willing to refine on what he reads, or not perfectly understanding it, has made reason one faculty of the mind, and common sense another; and inculcated, that the truth of all the objects of the latter is as intuitively discerned by his *common sense*, as that of the objects of the corporeal senses, the eye, ear, palate, nose, and fingers, which are respectively adapted to the perception of them.

In imitation of his countrymen, *Reid* and *Oswald*, he also has examined, after *Pere Buffier*, what has been advanced by *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, *Berkley*, and *Hume*; and indeed with justice exposed the absurdities of *Le bon David*, as he was ironically styled by *John James Rousseau*, who, if he had discerned the necessity of an established religion to confirm and perfect the civil institutes of legislatures, as clearly as he saw the rights of human kind, and what ought to be the chief objects of all legislation, had been the most eminent of all authors that the world hath hitherto produced: for no man did ever perceive the truths of those opinions which he has

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published, with more perspicuity, or delivered them with greater precision; nor did any other ever express them with more propriety and force, or manifest a greater degree of genius, and of original thinking. In fact, he is so conspicuously superior to *Voltaire*, *D'Alembert*, and all those who have attacked his works, that it is evidently manifest, their enmity to him arose from a consciousness of his superiority to them, and from the despicable envy of not being capable of bearing and confessing his pre-eminence.

But let me return to *Beattie*, who asserts, Chap. II. "that all reasoning terminates in first principles; all evidence ultimately intuitive; common sense the standard of truth to man."—And this intuitive evidence he applies to mathematical reasoning—to the evidence of external sense—to the evidence of internal sense or consciousness—to the evidence of memory—to reasoning from the effect to the cause—to probable and experimental reasoning—to analogical reasoning—to faith in testimony.

In order to elucidate this matter with the greater accuracy, let me first define what is uniformly understood by intuition: and this is, *immediate knowledge*, or *knowledge not obtained by deduction of reasoning, but instantaneously accompanying the ideas which are its objects*; such as the knowledge of colour by the eye, of sound by the ear,

ear, of taste, odour, and softness, by the other senses.

Let me now enquire, whether the truth of the objects of Common Sense, in all the preceding instances, be perceived in this instantaneous and intuitive manner, without any previous operation of the mind to effect it. It will be then discovered, whether this Plagiary hath understood the Author whom he hath so ungenerously plundered, or the idea which accompanies the terms *intuitive evidence* in the minds of all such as have just conceptions of it.

In order to evince this truth, let us examine a few of those propositions which he has given as proofs that common sense *intuitively* perceives the truth of all the objects of the human faculties: and to this end, Dr. *Beattie* having asserted, “that all reasoning terminates in first principles, “all evidence is ultimately intuitive, common sense the standard of truth to man,” proposes, Chap. II. to treat of truth on the following heads.—1. Of mathematical reasoning.—2. Of the evidence of external sense.—3. Of the evidence of internal sense, or consciousness.—4. Of the evidence of memory.—5. Of reasoning from the effect to the cause.—6. Of probable, or experimental reasoning.—7. Of analogical reasoning.—8. Of faith in testimony.—Such being

ing the subjects of his essay, before I shall proceed to them particularly, it seems necessary to animadvert a little on the title of this Chapter I. "That all reasoning *terminates* in first principles." Then must it be impossible to reason otherwise than *à posteriori*, from the effect to the cause; which is contradicted by every moment's experience: the mathematician reasons from his point, line, and surface; the mechanician, from elasticity, weight, forms, and proportions, in the constructing of machines; the farmer, that the sun rising to-morrow at six o'clock, he shall have light to proceed to his work; that his scythe, hook, and other instruments of husbandry, being well sharpened, will effect what is intended to be done by them; in fact, in all possible instances, whether they be scientific, or in the usage of common life, men reason from the cause to the effect, from the principle to its consequences; or experience and discoveries have effected nothing amongst men, respecting their conduct, in all the vast variety of knowledge and invention. This, I believe, will be far from being acknowledged by persons of common sense; and may it not be as justly asserted, that men always walk backwards, and do not see to what place they are going, as that they reason backwards to principles which they are to discover?

Before

Before we proceed to a more intimate examination of this matter, I request my reader to remark that definition of intuitive evidence which hath been given in the preceding page but one.

But *Beatie* asserts, pag. 58, "every step in a
" mathematical proof is self-evident, or must
" have been formerly demonstrated; and every
" demonstration doth finally resolve itself into
" intuitive or self-evident principle, which it is
" impossible to prove, and equally impossible to
" disbelieve." Hence, according to this writer, that which is acquired by reasoning, step by step, until it arrives at demonstration, is intuitive, self-evident, or knowledge not obtained by deduction of reasoning, but instantaneously accompanying the ideas which are its objects; and those demonstrations which are formed by drawing inferences from the relations in which they are situated respecting each other, resolve themselves into intuitive or self-evident principles, or into immediate knowledge instantaneously accompanying the ideas which are its objects. If this be admitted, then there is no difference between the perceptions which are received by the external senses, and those which are the effects of logical deduction, or the exercise of reason. This then is, to confound all those terms and distinctions which have hitherto been universally acknowledged

ledged to be essentially different, and to make that end which is discovered by investigation and long deductions of ratiocination, to be as immediately known as that which is seen by the eye, and instantaneously perceived.

The last article of the Chapter above mentioned is, that "Common Sense is the standard of truth to man:" and now it seems necessary to shew his idea of Common Sense, pag. 39. "The term *Common Sense* hath, in modern times, been used by philosophers, both *French* and *British*, to signify that power of the mind which perceives truth, or commands belief, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse, derived neither from education, nor from habit, but from nature; acting independently on our will, whenever its object is presented according to an established law, and therefore not improperly called *sense*; and acting in a similar manner upon all, or at least, upon a great majority of mankind, and therefore properly called *common sense*. It is in this sense and signification that the term *common sense* is used in the present enquiry."

Again, he says, page 42. "Reason, as implying a faculty not marked by any other name, is used by those who are most accurate in distinguishing, to signify that power of the mind by
" which

“ which we draw inferences, or by which we are
 “ convinced that a relation belongs to two ideas,
 “ on account of our having found, that those ideas
 “ bear certain relations to other ideas. In a word,
 “ it is that faculty which enables us, from rela-
 “ tions and ideas that are known, to investigate
 “ such as are unknown, and without which we ne-
 “ ver could proceed in the discovery of truth a
 “ single step beyond first principles, or intuitive
 “ actions: and it is in this last sense we are to
 “ use the word *reason* in the course of this en-
 “ quiry.

Such are his distinctions between common sense
 and reason: and page 47, he adds, “ There are
 “ few faculties, either of our mind or body, more
 “ improveable by culture, than that of reasoning;
 “ whereas common sense, like other instincts, ar-
 “ rives at maturity with almost no care of ours.
 “ To teach the art of reasoning, or rather of wran-
 “ gling, is easy; but it is impossible to teach com-
 “ mon sense to one who wants it.”

I must once more beg leave to insert the idea of
 Pere *Buffier* respecting common sense, page 22:
 “ What is here meant by common sense, is that
 “ disposition or quality, which nature has placed
 “ in all men, or evidently in the far greater num-
 “ ber of them, in order to enable them all, when
 “ they have arrived to the age and use of reason,
 “ to form a common and uniform judgement with
 “ respect

“ respect to objects different from the internal
 “ sentiment of their own perception, and which
 “ judgement is not the consequence of any anterior
 “ principle.” I shall now examine the instances
 which *Beattie* has adduced of the different modes of
 reasoning already related: it will then be seen;
 whether these instances are more applicable to
 reason than to common sense; as he has delivered
 them; and whether his definition, or that of *Pere*
Buffier, correspond most accurately with that idea
 which is generally conceived to belong to the
 term *common sense*, in the instances which *Bea-*
tie has afforded. Page 57, he tells us, “ There
 “ are two kinds of mathematical demonstra-
 “ tion: the first is called *direct*, and takes
 “ place when a conclusion is inferred from pre-
 “ mises which render it necessarily true; the other
 “ kind is called *indirect*, &c. with which I have
 “ nothing to do in this place.”

Such being his definition of mathematical de-
 monstration that it is a conclusion arising from
 inferences drawn from premises, which make it
 necessarily true; that is, by the operations of reason
 successively exerted; it seems not a little surpris-
 ing, that such truths should be perceived by *com-*
mon sense, as he has described it, “ a power of the
 “ mind which perceives truth, not by progressive
 “ argumentation, but by an instantaneous, in-
 “ stinctive, and infallible impulse.” If the pre-
 ceding

ceding mode of inference from premises to a conclusion necessarily true, be that of mathematical reasoning, the truth which is thence discerned can in no sense be said to be derived from an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse, without progressive argumentation. Either mathematical reasoning is, therefore, not that which he describes; or, being comprehended by inferring from premises to a conclusion, it cannot be the object of *Beattie's* common sense. But, in fact, his description of mathematical reasoning is true, and his definition of common sense erroneous: for such is the reality, that truth arising from mathematical reasoning is discovered by the very operations of reason, which he describes, “that power of the
 “human mind by which we draw inferences, or
 “by which we are convinced that a relation be-
 “longs to two ideas, on account of our having
 “found that these ideas bear certain relations to
 “other ideas.”

Hence it is evident, that truth, in mathematical reasoning, is the result of reason, proceeding from principles or premises by inference and induction, till it arrives at demonstration; and not of the intuitive discernment of his *common sense*, which, he asserts, is a different faculty from reason, and arrives, “like other instincts, - at maturity, with
 “almost no care of ours.”

d

However,

However, although the truths resulting from mathematical reasoning cannot possibly be the effect of the instantaneous and instinctive perception of *Beattie's* common sense, it coincides exactly with that of *Pere Buffier*: “ a quality which nature
 “ hath placed in men, in order to enable them,
 “ when they have arrived at the age and use of
 “ reason, to form a common and uniform judg-
 “ ment with respect to objects, &c.”

Now this common sense being acquired by age, cannot arrive to maturity, like instincts, with almost no care of ours; and being attained by the use of reason, that is, by inferring successively from principles and premises to a conclusive truth, cannot be a common sense that discerns instantaneously and instinctively. In the preceding manner *Beattie*, by presuming to refine on the ideas respecting common sense, as described by *Pere Buffier*, and by adopting another which is his own, hath deviated into a palpable absurdity. But let me proceed to his exemplifications, that mathematical truths are instantaneously perceived. Page 59, he says: “ but who will pretend to prove that
 “ a whole is greater than a part, or that things
 “ equal to one and the same thing are equal to
 “ one another?” Certainly there are many who will pretend to prove the preceding axioms; and this, because without proof they had never been comprehended.

Whole

Whole and *part*, *great* and *small*, are abstract ideas, derived from material substances which have been the objects of the external sense of seeing: the eye hath seen the whole mass; it hath seen it divided into parts; it hath thereby acquired the ideas of greater and less, by an operation of the mind called comparison, between two or more things: and from thence reason hath inferred that the mass, which contained the several parts, is necessarily greater than any of those parts of which the whole was composed; and in this manner, the antecedent axiom hath been proved to be true by one man to another, or by the same man reasoning in the preceding way. When the above axiom therefore is offered to the mind of any person who hath previously discerned the truth of it, by the preceding inference, it is not instantaneously discerned by *Beatie's* common sense, but by an instantaneous remembrance that it is absolutely true.

Such being the case in this simple axiom, it is yet more evident in the subsequent, "That things equal to one, and the same thing, are equal to one another:" for, in order to comprehend this truth, the senses must have learned to distinguish things by numeration, as one, two, &c. and thence to form abstract ideas of numbers. Equality is an idea obtained by the senses also, by comparing

paring two or more objects, relative to size, colour, shape, and other properties of bodies, and thereby discerning their agreement or disagreement; and from thence the idea of absolute equality is derived. It being discerned then, that two or more things correspond exactly with a third, it is logically inferred, that each of the former, being equal to the third, must of necessity be equal to one another. When this axiom, therefore, is, on future occasions, proposed to the mind, it is, as in the former case, by an act of reminiscence, and not of sense, either *common* or otherwise, that the truth is instantaneously perceived. As to the propriety of *instinctive*, as applied to common sense, it shall be animadverted on hereafter.

There is yet another mathematical truth, which this writer presumes to be instantaneously perceived: "the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles." Whoever has made the least observation on the manner in which this proposition is demonstrated in Euclid, will instantly be convinced, that the truth of it is neither instantaneously, nor intuitively discerned: for, in order to evince this truth, not only a diagram, but a long series of induction is inevitably requisite: so that, instead of this truth being intuitively discerned by all men, it really happens, that by far the greater part of mankind are incapable
of

of exerting that application and research which are necessary to the discerning of it.

I shall now examine what he has offered on the "evidence of external sense." To believe our senses, says he, page 64, "is therefore according to the law of nature; and we are prompted to this belief, not by reason, but by instinct, or common sense. I am as certain that I am at present in a house, and not in the open air,—that I see by the light of the sun, and not by the light of a candle,—that I feel the ground hard under my feet, and that I lean against a real, material table, as I can be of any geometrical axiom, or of any demonstrated conclusion."

How it should come to pass that men are not *prompted* to believe their senses, as much by reason as *Beattie's* common sense, seems difficult to ascertain, though it be easily asserted. Nay, to me it seems, that it is reason alone, or common sense, as described by *Buffier*, which induces us to believe our senses; for, having found by manifold experience, that our senses are the faithful reporters of the objects which are placed before them, we thence infer that they ought to be believed. But in what manner *Beattie's* common sense, which "perceives truth, or commands belief, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse," can

can afford a ground for believing our senses, seems to be utterly inexplicable.

Is it not somewhat extraordinary that common sense and instinct should be the same faculty? Instinct is defined, by as competent a judge of our language as any this kingdom hath produced, and shewn to be used in that sense, by authors of great eminence, to be desire, or aversion, acting on the mind, without the intervention of reason, or deliberation, or the power that determines the will of brutes. Now, that a man, by such desire or aversion, should be as certain that he is in a house, and not in the open air,—that he sees by the light of the sun, and not by the light of a candle—that he feels the ground hard under his feet, and that he leans against a real material table, as he can be of the truth of any geometrical axiom, seems to be inconceivable: for, in what manner instinct, which is an emotion of the mind, either towards or from the object before it, can be susceptible of discerning truths, and synonymous with a common sense, which instantaneously perceives the truth of things, appears to want much explanation to be comprehended. And if instinct and common sense be the same power, then brutes are possessed of *Beattie's* common sense; against which I have nothing to object. *Sir John Falstaff* indeed asserts, he knew the true prince by instinct: but that a man should know that he was leaning on a
table

table by instinct, was left for the discovery of Dr. Beattie. In fact, the certainty of all the preceding particulars arises intuitively from the evidence of the external senses of seeing and feeling, and is neither the object of instinct, common sense, nor belief: and from the whole of the antecedent passage it is manifest, that either this writer hath annexed no precise idea to the word *instinct*, or that he has used *instinctively* as synonymous with *intuitively*, through ignorance of the language in which he writes.

I shall now enquire whether the objects of internal sense or consciousness be intuitively or instinctively perceived: and of these, *I exist*, is a proposition, which he says, page 33, "he is conscious " his mind readily admits, and acquiesces in." But in what manner does this consciousness arise from common sense, when, in fact, this consciousness is nothing more than a reflection, that he thinks, and therefore that he is something, or an existence? By applying this mode of examination through all the instances adduced in his whole chapter, it will be seen that nothing therein is instantaneously perceived; but that all are the effects of inference and reasoning in greater or less degrees.

Proceed we now to examine what he has said on the evidence of memory. "We trust," says he, "to the evidence of memory, because we cannot " help trusting to it. The same providence that " endued

“endued us with memory, without any care of
 “ours,” as if man had been concerned in making
 himself, “endued us also with an instinctive pro-
 “pensity to believe in it, previously to all rea-
 “soning and experience.” It seems to be not per-
 “fectly easy to comprehend whether, by “believ-
 “ing in memory,” he means that we remember
 we believe, we remember; which no man will
 doubt: or that, “by believing in memory,” we
 believe all we remember, which is certainly not
 the case; for all men remember innumerable
 things which they do not believe. But what con-
 nection is there to be found between remembrance
 of things which are past, and the instantaneous
 perception of truth as soon as objects are offered
 to a faculty, which this writer has determined
 to be common sense? And if Providence, as he
 says, “has endued us with an instinctive propen-
 “sity to believe in what we remember, previously
 “to all reasoning and experience,” this gift of
 Providence would not appear to be the most eli-
 gible, since whosoever shall, by the influence of
 this propensity, be induced to believe without rea-
 soning and experience, must inevitably be led into
 endless error: and therefore, as instinct in all ani-
 mals is an infallible guide to their well-being, I
 am apt to conclude; that this propensity to believe
 in memory, previous to all reasoning and expe-
 rience,

rience, is not instinctive, nor the gift of Providence.

I shall now proceed to his chapter *of reasoning from the effect to the cause*. This he begins, page 110, with the story of a book gotten into his chamber, no body can tell how: “for, if his servants report be true, and if the book has not been brought by an invisible agent, it must have come in a miraculous manner, by the interposition of some invisible cause; for still he must repeat, that without some cause, it *could not possibly have come hither*.” which case is stated on *ifs* that never can happen. And then he boldly pronounces it to be an axiom clear, certain, and undeniable, that whatever beginneth to exist, proceedeth from some cause: whether this maxim be intuitive or demonstrable, may perhaps admit of some dispute.” And perhaps not: the very title of the chapter being of reasoning from the effect to the cause; that is, from a thing known, to a thing sought for; it is past dispute, that the latter cannot be instantaneously discerned, without progressive argumentation. As an instance of this truth, let us take what he has placed among the propositions in his first chapter, “There is a God:” and then let us shew in what manner the truth of this proposition is evinced. Whoever has seen an artist employed in making a watch, or other curious machine, and has observed

ferred the effects which result from the application of elastic or heavy bodies on wheels of certain proportions, and divisions of teeth, is convinced, from that which passes in his own mind, whenever he hath executed any thing with his own hands, that this artist was guided in all his operations by the direction of thought. Whenever therefore this person may, on future occasions, behold a mechanical composition, he readily infers, that it must have been the production of a thinking being, or of man.

In like manner, when the order and beauty of the universe are observed, the marvellous formation of animate and inanimate beings, to the ends of their existing, the adaptation of one thing to another, for the use and benefit of each respective being, and of the whole, he analogously concludes, that all this is the effect of an intelligent agent; and as these effects are so infinitely superior to those accomplished by the human being, he conceives the author of them to be perfect, and attributes to him the name of God. Hence it is evident, that the truth of the proposition, *There is a God*, can be perceived but by a series of analogical reasoning, from the effect to the cause; and therefore the truth of it cannot be discerned by *Beatie's* common sense, which comprehends intuitively, instantaneously, and instinctively.

The

The sixth chapter, of *Probable or Experimental Reasoning*, comes next in order. “ In all our reasoning, says he, page 120, from the cause to the effect, we proceed on a supposition and a belief, that the cause of nature will continue to be, in time to come, what we experience it to be at present, and remember it to have been in time past. This presumption of continuance is the foundation of all our judgements concerning future events; and this, in many cases, determines our conviction as effectually as any proof or demonstration whatever, although the conviction arising from it be different in kind from what is produced by strict demonstration, as well as from those kinds of conviction that attend the evidence of sense, memory, and abstract intuition:”—which is no less than abstract nonsense, since no abstract ideas can have originated but from some previous and specific perceptions of sensible and particular objects, and are creatures of the mind; and therefore they cannot be intuitive, or known without some intermediate and antecedent perceptions.

“ The highest degree of conviction, in reasoning from causes to effects, says he, is called *moral certainty*; and the inferior degrees result from that species of evidence which is called *probability, or verisimilitude*:—that all men will die, that

served the effects which result from the application of elastic or heavy bodies on wheels of certain proportions, and divisions of teeth, is convinced, from that which passes in his own mind, whenever he hath executed any thing with his own hands, that this artist was guided in all his operations by the direction of thought. Whenever therefore this person may, on future occasions, behold a mechanical composition, he readily infers, that it must have been the production of a thinking being, or of man.

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“ The highest degree of conviction, in reasoning from causes to effects, says he, is called *moral certainty* ; and the inferior degrees result from that species of evidence which is called *probability, or verisimilitude* :—that all men will die, that

“ that the sun will rise to-morrow, the sea ebb
 “ and flow, &c. no man can doubt, without be-
 “ ing accounted a fool. In these, and all other
 “ instances, where our experience of the past has
 “ been equally extensive and uniform, our judge-
 “ ment concerning the future amounts to moral
 “ certainty: we believe with full assurance, or at
 “ least without doubt, that the same laws of nature
 “ which have hitherto operated, will continue to
 “ operate, as long as we foresee no cause to inter-
 “ rupt or hinder their operation.

“ But no person who attends to his own mind,
 “ will say, that in these cases our belief, or con-
 “ viction, or assurance, is the effect of proof, or
 “ of any thing like it. If reasoning be at all em-
 “ ployed, it is only in order to give a clear view
 “ of our past experience with regard to the point
 “ in question. When this view is obtained,
 “ reasoning is no longer necessary; the mind by
 “ its own intellectual force, and in consequence
 “ of an irresistible and instinctive impulse, infers
 “ the future from the past, immediately, and with-
 “ out the intervention of any argument.”

Notwithstanding this hardy and round assertion,
 “ that no person who attends to his own mind will
 “ say, that in these cases our belief, or conviction,
 “ or assurance, is the effect of proof, or of any
 “ thing like it;” I shall venture to be of a very
 different opinion, and leave it to our readers

to determine whether this assertor, or I, have most attended to our own mind. In order to set this matter in a fair light, it seems requisite to determine what are the ideas which have been constantly annexed to the word *proof*: and these are, according to the authority of Dr. *Johnson*, founded on the usage of authors of the most unquestionable skill in the *English* language, *evidence, testimony, convincing token, convincing argument, means of conviction*. Now let me apply this sense of the word *proof* to what hath been already quoted from this author: “In all our reasonings from the cause to
 “ the effect, we proceed on a supposition and a
 “ belief that the course of nature will continue to
 “ be, in time to come, what we experience it to
 “ be at present, and remember it to have been
 “ in time past: this presumption of continuance
 “ is the foundation of all our judgements concern-
 “ ing future events; and this, in many cases, de-
 “ termines our conviction as effectually as any
 “ proof or demonstration whatsoever. The
 “ highest degree of conviction, in reasoning from
 “ causes to effects, is called *moral certainty*: that
 “ all men will die, that the sun will rise to-mor-
 “ row, &c. In these and all other instances, where
 “ our experience of the past has been equally ex-
 “ tensive and uniform, our judgement concerning
 “ the future amounts to moral certainty.”

The

The manner in which men reason on the preceding subjects is this: — I have lived to see ten thousand or any number of men to die; I have heard that all the preceding generations of men, consisting of millions of millions have died also: I have seen the sun rise ten thousand times; I have read and heard that it has daily done the same for six thousand years, or for two millions one hundred and ninety thousand days: from these unvarying evidences, I conclude that men will continue to die, and the sun to rise daily. Are these uniform instances of experience no convincing token, no convincing argument, or no means of conviction? Is our belief, conviction, or assurance, in these cases, not the effect of proof, or of any thing like it? And can there be an if—“ that reasoning is employed only to give us
 “ a clear view of our past experience with regard
 “ to the point in question, and when that view is
 “ obtained, that reasoning is no longer necessary,” when it is beyond contradiction, that the mind, by reasoning, infers from the uniform death of all preceding generations, that the present and future will yield to the same fate, and from the constant rising of the sun, from the creation to this day, that it will continue to rise on the subsequent? This is, indeed, what *Beattie* himself allows, and says, “ the sea has ebbed and flowed twice every
 “ day

“ day in time past ; therefore the sea will continue
 “ to ebb and flow twice every day in the time to
 “ come :” and, although this Writer, *Hume*, and
Campbell, as he asserts, have said the preceding
 “ is by no means a logical deduction of a conclu-
 “ sion from premises,” yet I presume they are all
 mistaken ; for from the premises founded on the
 universal experience of all men in all ages, on
 what has invariably passed from the beginning of
 all things to this day, the conclusion is logically
 a *proof*, though not a demonstration, that they
 will so continue to the end. For what is the
 meaning of the term *logic*, but the art of reason-
 ing ? And is it no part of that art, to reason analo-
 gically, and from the unvaried experience of what
 has daily happened for two millions one hundred
 and ninety thousand days, that the like will happen
 again to-morrow, and from which, as he allows,
 arises *moral certainty* ? If he should still persist,
 that the conclusion is not logical, will he also
 deny, that from the past to the future is an infe-
 rence of conviction, since he has said, “ this pre-
 “ sumption of continuance is the foundation of
 “ all our judgements concerning future events,
 “ and determines our conviction as effectually as
 “ any proof or demonstration whatsoever.” Such
 being the state of things according to himself, is
 it not extremely singular that he should assert,
 “ the mind, by its own innate force, and in conse-
 “ quence

“ consequence of an irresistible and instinctive impulse,
 “ infers the future from the past, immediately,
 “ and without the intervention of any argument ;”
 when it is evidently impossible, that an inference
 can be made without argumentation ? I infer that
 the sun will rise to-morrow, from its having risen
 daily for two millions one hundred and ninety
 thousand days ; and in like manner, of the in-
 stances of the death of man, and the flowing of
 the sea.

In fact, an *instinctive* force can, in no sense,
 have truth for its object, although an intuitive
 may. The former is an impassioned impulse of
 desire or aversion concerning things, and is in-
 susceptible of all reasoning, and of which truth
 can therefore never be the object : it may be of
 the latter, which is knowledge not obtained by
 deduction of reasoning, but instantaneously. In
 fact, if “ the mind by its own innate force, in conse-
 “ quence of an irresistible and instinctive impulse,
 “ infers the future from the past, immediately,
 “ and without the intervention of any argument ;”
 then can a horse, or more ignoble bruté, which
 is constantly impelled by instinct, infer the future
 from the past, as well as *James Beattie, LL.D.*

From what has been offered on this chapter, in
 all the instances which this writer hath adduced,
 is it not evident, that the truth of the respective
 objects is not perceived, “ in consequence of an
 “ irresistible

“irresistible and instinctive impulse, which infers
 “the future from the past immediately, and
 “without the intervention of any argument,” but
 by inferences fairly deduced, according to the
 only manner in which truth is to be discovered,
 by probable and experimental reasoning? And
 to suppose, in reasoning on things that have been
 known by experiment, that the mind does not
 infer that future events will resemble those which
 have passed from similar causes, or, in things likely
 to happen, that it does not compare the particu-
 lar instances of those which have lapsed with these
 which are present, and, from their dissimilitude
 or likeness, infer the degree of probability of a
 similar event, appears to me to be an egregious
 error in the knowledge of the human intellect.

In the subsequent chapter he treats of *Analogical Reasoning*. “Reasoning, says he, page 126, from
 “analogy, when traced up to its source, will be
 “found in like manner to terminate in a certain
 “instinctive propensity, implanted in us by our
 “Maker, which leads us to expect that similar
 “causes in similar instances do probably produce,
 “or will produce, similar effects. The probabi-
 “lity which this kind of evidence is fitted to il-
 “lustrate, does, like the former, admit of a vast
 “variety of degrees, from absolute doubting, up
 “to moral certainty.”

It has been already shewn, that truth can never be the object of *instinct*; and the instances which he adduces, will incontrovertibly prove that the consequences which happen, according to the lowest degrees of probability, up to *moral certainty*, are neither the effects of instinctive, nor even of instantaneous, or of intuitive perception. For example: the first which he has brought, of “an ancient philosopher who was shipwrecked in a strange country, discovered certain geometrical figures drawn upon the sand upon the sea-shore, he was naturally led to believe, with a degree of assurance not inferior to moral certainty, that the country was inhabited by men, some of whom were men of study and science, like himself. Had these figures been less regular, and liker the appearance of chance-work, the presumption from analogy, of the country being inhabited, would have been weaker; and had they been of such a nature as left it altogether dubious, whether they were the works of accident or design, the evidence would have been too ambiguous to serve as a foundation for any opinion.”

Let us examine whether this instance will furnish us with a proof, that “reasoning from analogy, when traced up to its source, will be found to terminate in a certain instinctive propensity.”

“propensity.” The source of this philosopher’s reasoning consisted in the geometrical figures which he found traced on the sand; and as he had never seen such figures delineated but by human beings, and these were too regular and exact to be the production of chance, he concluded, by comparing these figures on the sand, with others made by men, that the former were the works of man also. This then is absolutely a conclusion drawn by reasoning analogously, from what he *had* seen performed, to that which he *had not*, and thence inferring, that the latter had originated from the same cause with the former. In what manner then can it with justice be said, that this reasoning did terminate in a certain instinctive propensity? Instinct, it has been already said, is an emotion of the soul, springing from desire or aversion, acting in the mind, without the intervention of reason or deliberation; the power which determines the will of brutes. Did this philosopher, when he saw these figures on the sand, neither reason nor deliberate on the cause which most probably might have produced them? Was not his will to believe them the works of men, determined by that vast degree of similarity to those figures which he had experimentally seen delineated by human hands? And if the moral certainty, that these figures had been the production of a human being, arose from an instinctive propensity to be-

lieve it, what reason can be adduced, that the long-eared quadruped, which is directed solely by instinct, would not, from seeing the like figures on sand, conclude that they were the operations of men?

In fact, that nothing may be wanting to prove the contrary of what he has asserted, he himself tells us, “in reasoning from analogy, we argue
 “from a fact or thing experienced, to something
 “similar not experienced; and from our view of
 “the former ariseth an opinion with regard to the
 “latter; which opinion will be found to imply a
 “greater or less degree of assurance; according
 “as the instance from which we argue is more or
 “less similar to the instance to which we argue.”
 Can there be found, in any writer whatsoever, a passage that so perfectly subverts the assertion, *that all reasoning from analogy, traced to its source, will be found to terminate in a certain instinctive propensity?* for can that assurance, which is obtained “by
 “arguing from a fact experienced, to something
 “similar not experienced, and thence deducing
 “a degree of assurance, according as the instance
 “from which we argue is more or less similar to
 “the instance to which we argue,” possibly be conceived to have arisen from a certain instinctive propensity, or from an instantaneous and irresistible impulse, which is Dr. *Beattie’s* Common Sense?

But

But there is yet another instance, which he hath adduced to verify his assertion of an instinctive propensity to the purposes above mentioned, which is still more inconsistent and contradictory. Page 128, he says, “ a child who has been burnt
“ with a red-hot coal, is careful to avoid touching
“ the flame of a candle ; for, as the visible quali-
“ ties of the latter are like to those of the former,
“ he expects, with a very high degree of assurance,
“ that the effects produced by the candle, ope-
“ rating on his fingers, will be similar to those
“ produced by the burning coal.” Now, if reason-
ing by “ analogy, when traced up to its source,
“ will be found to terminate in a certain instinc-
“ tive propensity,” how comes it to happen that
this *instinctive* power, like all others of that kind,
did not instantaneously operate, and prevent the
child from touching the red-hot coal, and burn-
ing his fingers ; and, without waiting to derive
from experience, and from reasoning on the pain
which had been caused by the burning coal, that
he should again suffer in like manner, by touching
the candle which resembled the coal, and thereby
teach him to abstain from touching it ? Surely,
there can exist nothing less like an instinctive pro-
pensity than this reasoning analogically, from
what had passed, that the like would again happen
from substances so nearly resembling, as a flaming
coal and a flaming candle. This then is evidently
a con-

a conclusion drawn from experience, in which there is nothing either intuitive, instantaneous, or instinctive : it is therefore incompatible with Dr. *Beattie's* common sense, and perfectly consentaneous with that of Pere *Buffier*, and other French writers.

Dr. *Beattie* tells us, however, “ it deserves to be
 “ remarked, that the judgement which a child
 “ forms on these occasions may arise, and often
 “ doth arise, previous to education and reason-
 “ ing, and while experience is very limited.”
 In my opinion, after Dr. *Beattie* has shewn that the disinclination of a child to touch a candle arose from the experience of being burnt by the red-hot coal, he could not, conformably with that doctrine, have reasonably said, “ that the judge-
 “ ment which a child forms on these occasions
 “ does often arise previous to reasoning,” when it is manifest, that the reasoning of the child by analogy, is the reasoning that the wisest person of any age could have exerted in such case ; and certainly he has afforded us no instance, that the judgement formed by a child on such occasions, hath ever arisen previous to reasoning, nor shewn how judgement can be formed without reasoning. We cannot but agree, that, although their experience may be very limited, yet it is evident, that this experience is adequate to the full purpose of self-preservation.

But,

But, that no doubt may remain in the minds of his readers, that a child does *not* form a judgement on such occasions previous to reasoning, he tells us, “ A child, knowing that a lighted candle is a dangerous object, will be shy of touching a glow-worm, or a piece of wet fish, shining in the dark, because of their resemblance to the flame of a lighted candle ; but, as this resemblance is but imperfect, his judgement with regard to the consequence of touching will probably be more inclined to doubt, than in the former case, where the instances were more similar.”

Hence it is evident, that this instance, which is, *apparently*, adduced to evince that “ the judgement which a child forms on such occasions, doth often arise, previous to reasoning,” is nevertheless the fullest evidence that he forms no such previous judgement ; and that he exerts every effort of reason that can be conceived, in such a state of things, by the wisest of mortals : for, from being previously burnt by the lighted candle, he has acquired the experience of what will be the probable event of a similar application to a similar thing ; and by comparing the phenomena of the glow-worm and the shining fish, with the light of the candle, he infers, that the former will have a like effect on his finger with the latter, and abstains from touching its resemblance.

But

But then, by a still more accurate comparison between these objects, he finds their resemblance to be but imperfect; and thence his judgement entertains a doubt, whether the consequences of touching the glow-worm and shining fish may be similar to those of touching the candle. Such is the process of reasoning which Dr. *Beattie* has brought to prove, that the judgement of a child, on such occasions, doth often arise previous to reasoning; and that “reasoning from analogy, “when traced up to its source, will be found to “terminate in a certain instinctive propensity, “which leads us to expect, that similar causes, “in similar circumstances, do probably produce, “or will probably produce, similar effects;” and this instinctive propensity is his *common sense*, “that “perceives truth not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and “irresistible impulse;” or Dr. *Beattie* is mistaken in what he has advanced.

I come now to his section of *Faith in Testimony*; and in this he says, “to believe testimony is “agreeable to nature, to reason, and to sound “philosophy;” to which I shall object nothing. But certainly the faculty of faith can never be the same with common sense: and yet perhaps by this faculty, things are as intuitively believed, as objects are perceived by the external senses; and the
mind

mind receives them also as true, by a kind of instinctive propensity to believe whatever is marvellous and interesting. But in this section, Dr. *Beattie* has said nothing either of *intuition*, or of *instinct*.

Such then is the truth respecting this writer. By deviating from the definition of common sense as it is laid down by Pere *Buffier*, which consists in a judgement acquired by age and the use of reason, and setting up another of his own conception, which discerns all things by an intuitive, irresistible, instantaneous, and instinctive impulse, he hath rendered the science of that illustrious Author utterly inapplicable to his new principle. Notwithstanding this, all that has the least degree of merit, through his whole essay, is pillaged from the learned Jesuit, and other writers among the French, and ungratefully concealed, without acknowledging the obligation.

Hence it arises, that what has been said by *Beattie* in relation to the objects of common sense, as perceiving truth by an intuitive, irresistible, instantaneous, and instinctive impulse, is totally erroneous, and that all is right and true, when considered as objects of common sense, as it is delineated by *Buffier*, a judgement of things formed by age, and the use of reason.

One act of meritorious service must nevertheless be ascribed to Dr. *Beattie*. He hath exposed

f

many

many of the errors and absurdities of *Hume* his countryman, though a hundred times more remain to be described in their full deformity and mischief. To the memory of that man, however, his countrymen have erected an edifice; and they have atrociously placed the monumental remembrance of this Atheist on a rock, in a place of Christian burial, alluding, as I suppose, that his fame on that account deserved to be founded on an unperishable basis. What inscription is inserted on it, I know not, having seen nothing but a drawing of that monument. †

I shall now take leave of my Readers with requesting them to compare the translation of *Perc Buffier* with the publications of *Reid*, *Oswald*, and *Beattie*; but more especially with the latter two: they will then be convinced, how freely

† This monument, erected to the propagator of such principles as would subvert all religion, and the providence of God, remains untouched; though not long since the places of Christian worship, the sacred vessels belonging to the very altar itself, and other things of private property, were violated and destroyed by a rabble at Edinburgh, because the Roman Catholics were adoring God according to their own consciences. And it must not be forgotten, that these wanton acts of violence and injustice were openly perpetrated in the metropolis of Scotland, by the immediate instigation of some of the meek and pious disciples of a merciful Redeemer, and with the notorious connivance and approbation of the worthy Magistrates of that Country, who, in the midst of convivial mirth and jollity, secretly exulted at the very moment those glorious operations of fanatic zeal were carrying on.

freely they have pillaged, and how designedly they have concealed their plagiarisms; they will then be convinced also, how egregiously they have mangled the production of the learned Jesuit, and, by placing another head on the body which he had formed, how criminally they have attempted, by that alteration, to pass their heterogeneous productions as legitimately begotten by themselves: whereas, by those means, they have endeavoured to make an union of admirable science and instruction with a head incapable of being connected with it, but as a disgrace; I mean, that, by rejecting the idea of *Buffier*, respecting Common Sense, and by adopting another of their own fabrication, they have as it were reversed the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and, instead of feet of clay, and a head of brass, they have made the head of clay, and left the rest of the body to remain in its original substance.



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