

SERIES
OF
LECTURES
UPON
LOCKE'S ESSAY.

BY THE
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DUBLIN:
PRINTED BY R. GRAISBERRY.
PUBLISHED BY HODGES AND M^rARTHUR, 21, COLLEGE-
GREEN.

1824.

PREFACE.

THE following Work has been undertaken with considerable reluctance. I have been repeatedly applied to by Dublin publishers to furnish them with a contraction of Locke's Essay, and have received liberal offers of pecuniary remuneration. Hitherto I have uniformly declined the undertaking, and have been only induced to enter upon the present work, by having ascertained that a spurious contraction, in a catechetical form, is in circulation under my name, sold by the booksellers as mine, and bought as such by the students. Finding the defects of my own works sufficiently numerous, without being stigmatised with the errors of others, I have, in self defence, attempted these Lectures upon the Essay.

To execute what the publishers first proposed, a mere contraction of Locke's Essay, was a task to which I could not prevail upon myself to stoop. If this be considered arrogance, it is a charge to which I must honestly plead guilty. I have, however, attempted a work which I hope will be found more useful than any contraction could be.

To illustrate and explain Locke's Essay on the Understanding in a series of Lectures, to compare his opinions on disputed points with those of other modern philosophers, to show where Locke disagrees with himself, and maintains contradictions, and to embody in the same work all the parts of the Essay, which were necessary and useful, by introducing them either in substance or in the very words of the author, where these are material, appeared to me a work likely to be more beneficial than the contraction required. Such has been my design in the present lectures; how far I have succeeded, must be determined by the opinions of others.

The manner in which Locke's works are too often studied, appears to be attended with less benefit to the student than could be desired. It is the practise to "get by heart" the doctrines and sometimes little more than the words of this philosopher. Having no other works on the same subject in his hands, the student, when his academical studies are completed, frequently goes forth into the world, fully persuaded that the opinions which he has thus "committed to memory" are infallibly right, and the only doctrines, on these subjects, held by rational creatures of this age. Absurd as this may appear, I have known many examples of it. One of the great benefits to be derived from this department of science seems to be the exercise which the understanding receives in the investigations which it involves. What strength can the intellect derive from "getting by heart" the opinions of Locke? As well might we expect, by reading

a description of riding or walking, to acquire the vigour derivable from those healthful exercises.

My object therefore has been, on disputable points, to give the reader, in some degree, a view of both sides of the question, and to enable him to judge and reason for himself. Where, therefore, I have ventured to differ from Locke, it is of little moment whether I am right or wrong; it will, in either case, contribute to disenthral the mind of the student from the bondage of a particular system, in matters on which mankind is never likely to agree.

My publishers finding me determined against writing a catechetical contraction of Locke, have made a special request that I should annex a collection of questions upon the lectures. Such students as think any advantage is derivable from this, will find them in the Appendix. The questions which may be considered indispensable, and which even the most indolent student should be able to answer, are distinguished by the mark (§). Those who aspire to a more accurate knowledge of the Essay, should attend to those marked thus (+). Those who look for honors should be generally prepared in all the questions.

The answers to the questions will be readily found, by referring to the corresponding section of the Lecture. This arrangement will, I trust, accommodate all classes of readers.

LECTURES

UPON

LOCKE'S ESSAY.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. **LOCKE** introduces the subject of his *Essay* by enumerating the motives which urged him, and which may therefore also be supposed to incite others to prosecute an inquiry into the nature and extent of the intellectual operations. These inducements he states to be three fold: 1^o the nobleness of the subject, 2^o the usefulness of the results, 3^o the pleasure derived from the pursuit. When we consider that the understanding is the great power by which man is elevated above other animals, or in the words of our author, that which “sets him above the rest of sensible beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion which he has over them,” it cannot but be considered one of the noblest objects of investigation. This being the power which “directs our thoughts in the search of other

things," and by the operations of which we are enabled to view the recesses of nature, which, but for its improvement, must for ever have been concealed: and what is of still greater moment, that by which a knowledge of ourselves, and of those rules by which as beings accountable to a moral governor we should regulate our actions, its extensive utility must be most striking. That a pursuit having such an object,* and such ends, should be pleasurable, is a question only to be resolved by an appeal to experience. The pleasure derived from it is illustrated by Locke, by comparing it to the pleasure which light gives to the eye.

In such an enquiry there are necessarily considerable difficulties to be overcome. The difficulties arise from the circumstance, that the objects and instruments of investigation are the same, namely, the operations of the mind. The enquiry is into the nature of these, and the only instruments by which the enquiry can be conducted, are these very operations. This difficulty Locke illustrates by the eye, which, though it is the mean whereby we see other things, can never behold itself; thus the mind finds a similar difficulty in setting itself before its own view, and making itself "its own object."

2. Having introduced the subject of his work, or as he modestly terms "his essay," our Author proceeds to develop the views he designs to take of the human mind and its capacities. His object he states to be "human knowledge" rather than the human mind, and "human knowledge" as far only as respects its "original certainty, extent and degrees." The word "original" here must be

* The object and the end in popular works are frequently confounded. The object is the subject matter of a treatise; the end, the purpose to be attained by treating of the object. Thus the objects of this essay are the operations of the mind. The end is to teach proper methods of searching after truth.

taken in a limited sense. In its most extended acceptation it might be understood to apply to an investigation which would trace our knowledge and its elements, our ideas, as far back as their "first cause." To guard against this misconception, Locke distinctly declines the "physical consideration of the mind." Under the "physical consideration of the mind" is embraced 1^o all enquiry into its essence. 2^o The peculiar organic modifications and motions by which sensation is effected. 3^o Whether ideas in their original formation depend upon matter? These he declines, not from their inutility, but as not forming a part of his design, which, as has been observed, is strictly confined to what respects human knowledge, its original (*i. e.* elements,) certainty and extent.

The necessity of fixing the limits of knowledge, and of settling distinctly the measures of its certainty must be strongly impressed upon us, when we observe the discordancy and even contradiction which exists in the opinions of mankind on various subjects. This discrepancy in judgment can only arise from men adopting wrong measures of probability, and false criterions of certainty, but is nevertheless frequently attended with the mischievous consequence of driving unreflecting minds into positive scepticism.

3. The method which our Author proposes to pursue in his inquiry is as follows:

1^o To enquire into the original of our ideas, or the ways whereby they come into the mind.

2^o To determine the knowledge derived from them, its 1^o evidence, 2^o certainty, and 3^o extent.

3^o To inquire into the nature and grounds of faith or opinion.

By faith or opinion is meant "that assent which is given to a proposition, of whose truth there is no certain knowledge."

4. An ignorance of the extent of our intellectual fa-

culties, and of the investigations to which they are proportionate, is productive of two opposite errors, scil. dogmatism and scepticism. The dogmatist overrates, the sceptic underrates our faculties. The one ascribes greater, and the other less validity to the conclusion of our reason than the grounds on which those conclusions are built would justly warrant. Of these intellectual maladies (for so we must call them) there are various degrees, and there is probably no finite being who is perfectly free from any degree of either. From the sceptic who rejects the conclusions of abstruse metaphysics, to the sceptic who will not venture to affirm his own existence, we meet in common life with all the intermediate shades of error.

Extreme begets extreme. Scepticism is the child of dogmatism. The dogmatist, confident in the fancied extent of his faculties, plunges into speculations, beyond the range of human intellect. He flounders in an ocean of error. Baffled and disgusted at his failure, and confounded with the contradictions and embarrassments in which he has involved himself, in a sort of intellectual sulkiness, he wilfully abandons all proper use of his mental energies, and concluding that, because he failed in his search into what was removed beyond the wit of man, he cannot depend with certainty on any thing, he gives himself up to absolute scepticism. The folly of this degree of scepticism is compared by Locke to that of one who would reject the use of his legs, and "sit still and perish, because he has not wings to fly." He also illustrates the folly of that indolence which is the consequence of scepticism, by one who would refuse the use of candle-light, because he had not broad sunshine, although the former were sufficient for his purposes. He that "entertains all objects in that way and proportion in which they are suited to his faculties, and capable of being presented to him," uses his understanding as he should. If probability is all that

can be attained, he rests content with it, gives the proposition its proportionate degree of assent, and governs his conduct conformably to it. He does not, like the dogmatist, attempt to reduce it to positive demonstration, nor like the sceptic, reject it altogether, because he cannot attain that demonstration.

These are manifest abuses of our finest faculty. Were it possible to do that perfectly which Locke proposes; to ascertain with distinctness the limits of our knowledge, the boundary between what may be, and what cannot be comprehended by the human mind, "the horizon which defines the enlightened and dark parts of things," these two abuses would be avoided. But though it be not possible to effect this purpose, however desirable, it is yet possible to do much towards approximating to those limits, though it be not possible, perfectly to cure the diseases, their intensity may be very much mitigated. This Locke proposed to effect by his inquiry into the human mind, and has certainly to a great degree succeeded in his design. He revolutionized the science of the mind, dashed to pieces speculations which had commanded the reverence and admiration of ages, and fixed that science upon more rational and firm foundations than the united talents of the sages who preceded him had by their continued efforts been able to effect.

5. Our faculties have limits. The knowledge therefore to be attained by those faculties has corresponding limits. But this is a predicament in which we stand in common with all finite created beings. The difference between man and the highest created being lies only in the *place* of the limit. On this score we have then no cause of complaint or discontent, unless one would aspire to one of the incommunicable attributes of divinity, infinite comprehension. As to the the limitations which

have been set to our intellectual capacity, Locke contends that we should rest satisfied with them for these reasons :

1^o. When we compare our own powers with those of the other occupants of the globe, we must at once perceive the immense superiority which is given to us; so great, that although far from being the first in physical power, yet such is the dominion given us by the intellect, we maintain a sway over even the strongest and most ferocious.

2^o. Although the powers of mind given to us fall infinitely short of comprehending the vast extent of being floating in the universe, and even probably shrink into nothing before the comprehensions of other and superior created beings, yet we have all that is necessary for the conveniencies, comforts, and even luxuries and elegancies of this life, and what is of infinitely more consequence, we have powers fully adequate to point out the rules of conduct which will ensure a permanent felicity in the next; we have, as St. Paul says, *παντα προς ζωνη και ευσηβειαν*, every thing conducive to the convenience of life, and the cultivation of virtue.

3^o. We have that degree of comprehension which is suited to our state. Had we more, the circumstances in which we are placed might become intolerable, and the extension of our intellect produce only an extension of misery. Had we less, our quantity of happiness would be proportionably less than our situation and circumstances would admit of.

In a word, whatever may be the limits of our faculties, they are sufficiently and more than sufficiently wide for all our purposes here, and it is perfect folly to reject the use of them because they are not more extended. The sounding line of the mariner, as our author observes, is of considerable use to him, although it be not capable of fathoming all the depths of the ocean. It is sufficient for him if it measure those parts through which his voyage

lies, and it is his own fault if he wander into regions which lie out of his way. Our faculties are perfectly adequate to investigate "all that concerns and conduct," and this is all that is absolutely necessary to be known here.

6. Previously to entering upon his proposed enquiry, Locke premises that he shall proceed upon a certain postulate. He states that he calls that thing about which the mind is occupied when the man thinks, an *idea*. His postulate is the assumption of the existence of ideas. It would appear from his definition that this is as evident as thinking itself. But from subsequent parts it appears that he means by the word *idea*, something more than is expressed in his definition. He speaks of *external things* as the exciting causes of *ideas*. He therefore evidently intends *ideas* and *external things* to be different beings. Suppose then it is asserted that the mind when it thinks is employed about external things, does Locke's postulate mean merely the existence of external things? Certainly not, for in one of the chapters of the fourth book, he occupies himself in the proof of this very proposition. Something more than is contained in this postulate than appears at the first view of it, and this is only to be collected from a consideration of other parts of the "essay." Locke's postulate is really this; that there exist in the minds of men certain effects produced there by certain things existing in what is called the material world. These effects are what the mind contemplates in thought, and they are the only indications or proofs which man possesses of the "existence of external objects," and they are what our author calls "ideas." The external exciting causes he denominates matter and its modifications. The existence of this latter he does not assume, but professes to prove from the former. The ideas and their exciting causes he takes to be things altogether heterogeneous, and admitting no comparison.

Locke thinks himself warranted in this assumption, as he declares that every man is conscious of the existence of ideas in his own mind, and other men's words and actions convince him that they exist in theirs.

We have dwelt at length upon the matter of the introduction, as it is of considerable consequence in forming a clear view of the subjects of investigation, as we proceed through the essay itself.

LECTURE II.



Outline of the Essay. Of sensation and reflection. The Cartesian doctrine; that of the soul combatted.

1. BEFORE we enter upon the details of the "Essay" it may be useful to take a general view of its subject, somewhat more developed than the short plan which our author has laid down in his "method" given in the introduction.

Conformably to this plan he devotes the first two books to an enquiry into the true source of our ideas. The main doctrine which he establishes is, that all our primitive ideas originate in sensation. After the mind becomes furnished with ideas by the senses, it begins to exercise its capacities of compounding, comparing, abstracting, &c. The mind contemplating these, its own operations, acquires ideas of them, which ideas form a new class wholly distinct from the former, and which he calls ideas of reflection. His principal argument to establish the doctrine that sensation and reflection are the original of all our ideas, is an induction completed *a fortiori*. As it would be impossible to enumerate *all* our ideas, and prove each separately to come from one or other of these sources, he shews, in a general way, that very comprehensive classes undoubtedly arise from them; the most obvious are the ideas peculiar to each of the five senses, the ideas of the different operations of the mind, &c.

This induction, which must, from its very nature be imperfect, he confirms, by shewing that those ideas which seem to be most abstruse in their origin, and most unlikely to proceed from the sources he assigns, do, nevertheless, actually proceed from them, and from no other. The ideas he selects for this purpose, are space, time, and infinity.

2. This inductive process, though it is the principal, is not the only argument on which he founds his theory of sensation and reflection. There are several subsidiary arguments confusedly scattered through his work, which we shall attempt to enumerate here :

1^o Those who denied sensation and reflection to be the only sources alleged many of our ideas to *innate*; that is, to be originally impressed upon the mind in the first moment of its creation, and to constitute an essential and inseparable part of the mind itself. They not only alleged that there were certain ideas thus impressed, but also maintained that there were actually some truths, the perception of which was simultaneous with the creation of the living principle. To state this more plainly; they maintained that at the moment that life is communicated to that portion of organised and hitherto inert matter designed to receive it in the womb, there are at the same time conveyed to it clear and distinct perceptions of certain ideas, and even of the truth of certain abstract propositions, and hence these ideas and propositions have been called *innate*. Locke devotes his first book to the refutation of this doctrine; and if this be the only source assigned for ideas, his own doctrine may be considered to be thus established, by reasoning from the removal of one part to the position of the others. No idea can be considered innate, the existence of which may be accounted for by any of the ordinary ways whereby we get other ideas. For it is unphilosophical to ascribe more causes than are sufficient to solve the phenomenon. It

is contrary to the economy of nature to do by two different causes that which might have been done by one and the same.

2^o He draws an analogical argument from tracing back the state of the mind from the adult to the child, from the child to the infant, and so back to the moment of its birth, which is the first moment in which we can observe it. Through all these stages we find the stock of ideas diminishing rapidly, and find scarcely any in the newborn infant; whereas, had we proceeded in the other direction, we should have found the variety of ideas increasing in proportion to the variety of sensible objects which presented themselves, and to the attention with which they are contemplated. Arguing therefore, by analogy, we may infer, that were we able to carry our observation back from infancy to the moment of creation, we should find no ideas *then* actually existing, though probably they would immediately begin to exist.

3^o Locke frequently uses the *argumentum ad ignorantiam*. He appeals to his opponents to assign any idea not derived from these sources. Although this species of argumentation is in general not entitled to much weight, yet it is peculiarly fit in the case in which he applies it. It is on all hands admitted, that by far the greater number of our ideas arise from sensation and reflection. It is therefore much more easy to assign some of the few, which have been alleged not to arise from them, than to go through an inductive process to establish the contrary.

4^o He deduces an argument from etymology in support of this doctrine. He observes, that most of the words in use, even those expressing ideas of reflection, are derived from names expressive of sensible ideas. Such are, imagine, apprehend, adhere, conceive, instill, disgust, &c. spirit, angel, &c. And he conjectures that if we were able to trace all names back to their first origin, we should find them all ultimately implying sensible ideas.

3. In the course of his investigations respecting the original of our ideas, he enters into several inquiries which do not strictly come under that head. Thus he examines other qualities of ideas, as their clearness, distinctness, reality, adequacy, &c. These considerations conclude his second book.

According to the method laid down in the introduction he should next have proceeded to the consideration of knowledge and its attributes. In his progress, however, finding a more intimate connection between language and ideas than he at first had expected, he conceived it necessary to devote a part of his work to the consideration of language, and its influence upon our ideas and knowledge. This subject he has very fully treated in his third book. The fourth book is altogether devoted to investigations respecting knowledge and probability, and their attributes.

4. Having now stated more particularly the subjects to which we shall have to apply our attention in these lectures, we shall proceed to examine our author's reasonings respecting the original of our ideas. As the doctrine of innate ideas and principles is in a great degree exploded, we shall not at present enter into further particulars respecting the subject of the first book than those which have been already stated. Assuming then the existence of ideas in the mind, the question is, whence have they come? The mind, in the first moment of its creation, is compared by Locke to "white paper," capable of receiving various characters and impressions, but on which nothing is as yet written. "Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it, with almost endless variety?" He ascribes all this in one word to EXPERIENCE. This experience is two-fold; sensation and reflection. Locke seldom gives formal and settled definitions of his terms, the

circumstances under which he describes his "Essay" to have been written may possibly account for this. His meaning is frequently to be only collected from carefully observing the manner in which he uses and applies his terms. The term sensation, is an example of this. He seems to use this term and perception nearly synonymously. When examined, however, we shall find that perception is a more general term, as it is applicable to ideas of reflection as well as those of sensation. There are several different passages in the essay which are indifferently considered as definitions of sensation, and indeed seem to be given as such by the author. Such are the following:

"This great source of most of the ideas we have depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION. B. 2. Ch. I. § 3.

—— Sensation; *which is* such an impression or motion made in some part of the body, as produces some perception in the understanding. B. 2. Ch. I. § 23.

—— Sensation; *which is* the actual entrance of an idea into the understanding by the senses. B. 2. Ch. XIX. § 1."

From a comparison of the last two definitions, one might suppose that by the word perception, our author meant an idea. If he does not mean by the word perception, in the first of these definitions, an idea, the two definitions are not alike, and therefore he uses the word sensation unsteadily. If, on the other hand, perception means, as would appear from B. 2. Ch. IX. the *actual production* of an idea, the last definition applies to perception as well as to sensation; and in this case the second definition becomes absurd, only defining by a synonymous term. As to the first definition it is also objectionable, as we are ignorant (as far as respects any thing contained in it) what "that great source" is. These little inaccuracies are every where observable through our author,

who seems better qualified to prescribe rules to others how to avoid the unsteady use of words, than to avoid that abuse himself.

5. His definition of reflection is "the notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them." This definition is perfectly adequate. The term "operations" might indeed be better replaced by powers, or still better by faculties, which implies either active or passive capacity. This objection, however, Locke guards against a little after by observing, that the term operation is used "in a large sense, as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind about its ideas, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them, such as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thought."— This use of the word operation countenances a similar use of the same word in the definition of simple apprehension, in the Compendium of Logic by Murray. Judging by the example which our author here gives of the passive sense in which he uses the word operation, he does not seem altogether aware of the scope of the objection to it, as it occurs in the definition of reflection. That objection is simply this, that "the notice which the mind takes" of certain passive faculties, as for example, perception, strictly speaking, does not come under the definition of an idea of reflection, and yet our author plainly intends it should, for he declares that perception is the first faculty of the mind about its ideas, and *therefore* the first simple idea of reflection. (Ch. IX. § 1.) The suppressed premise in this enthymeme is evidently the definition of reflection; and it may be observed that he tacitly supposes the word "faculty" substituted for "operation." This, and such like examples, are properly the objections to the word "operation" in the definition of reflection; which objection is however removed if the word operation be taken as synonymous with faculty.

6. Whatever confusion or inaccuracy there may be found

in Locke's definitions of the terms sensation and reflection, when subjected to a rigorous verbal scrutiny, no great difficulty can be presented to a candid enquirer after truth, who is not disposed to cavil in taking up the general tenor of our author's meaning. He supposes, as has been before observed, the existence of external objects, which, by affecting our organs, produce ideas in our minds. This, it is true, is an hypothesis; but that is no objection to founding upon it a definition. The impression which thus produces an idea in the mind is called sensation; and the ideas produced are called *ideas of sensation* or *sensible ideas*, and sometimes *sensible qualities*. The mind being furnished with these ideas, and being also endued with certain powers capable of being exerted upon ideas, the exertion of those powers and operations effected upon the ideas of sensation, follow. The mind being conscious of these operations, and *feeling* them going forward, turns its view inwards upon itself, and attentively observes the processes, and thus acquires ideas of these operations. This is called reflection. To give an example; let us suppose that yesterday a tulip had fallen under our view, and we thus acquired by the senses an idea of it. To-day we wish to describe it to another, and endeavour to reproduce the same idea without the presence of the object itself. Succeeding in doing so, we observe the process of mind necessary for that purpose, we acquire a distinct idea of it, and we call that idea by the name *recollection*. The acquisition of our idea, whether of sensation or reflection, is called *perception*.

7. The perception of ideas of reflection necessarily occurs later than those of sensation, for two reasons; 1^o because ideas of sensation must have been perceived before the mind could have had any operations, and therefore before it could have had ideas of reflection. 2^o Ideas of reflection require an observation of the operation of our minds, and an abstraction from external objects, which

cannot be looked for but in persons somewhat advanced in life.

8. Having explained the nature of sensation and reflection, Locke combats the principle of Des Cartes, that the quality of thinking is the essence of the soul. This Philosopher held the doctrine, that nothing exists but substances. Substances he divided into two classes, thinking substances, and extended substances; thus making thought the essential quality of the one class, and extension that of the other. The essence of spirit being thus fixed in thinking, he concluded that thinking is absolutely inseparable from spirit, and thence, that the supposition that the soul, at any moment was free from thought, involved a positive contradiction. In virtue of the other principle, that the essence of matter consisted in extension, he concluded that there was no vacuum, nor even a possibility of it, and that therefore the universe is absolutely full. By this principle, space, void of body, is totally excluded, for extension being implied in the idea of space, matter is so too, as he makes it the distinguishing property of matter. Locke attacks both these principles; we shall however for the present confine ourselves to the first.

9. Locke considers thinking the action of the soul, and conceives it to be no more essential to the soul than motion is to the body. The body having the power to move may or may not exert that power, as the will may dictate. So the soul having the power to think, the will possesses a certain power over the thoughts, though not to the same extent as in the former case. The action of the mind in thinking cannot be suspended by the dictate of the will. The attention may be increased or relaxed, the current of the thought may be in some degree regulated and directed by the will, but that current *cannot be stopped*. It ceases only in sleep or in death. This perhaps it was which led Des Cartes to his principle. Perceiving the

inability of the will to suspend the process of thought while awake, and not conceiving how that could be considered as an action over which the will had no power, he concluded, that it must be an essential quality of the soul, and that it must subsist in sleep, although from some physical cause, depending on the state of the body, we are not conscious of it. Locke considers Des Cartes to have been guilty of sophistry, in establishing this position by a *petitio principii*. He supposes him to have first *defined* the soul to be a thinking being, and then *inferred* that it always thinks. But Des Cartes was too acute to impose on himself, and too prudent, as well as too honest to attempt to impose on others by such a flimsy sophism. The truth is, Des Cartes never designed it as an *inference*. It was one of his *hypotheses*; for the philosophy of that day proceeded entirely on hypotheses. Des Cartes invented this as that which was most adequate to solve the phenomenon. The objection which may with truth and effect be brought against the Cartesian principle is, 1^o That it is a mere hypothesis; and 2^o That it is inadequate to account for the phenomenon of sleep, in which all men agree that they are not conscious of thought.

We shall now follow our author through the different absurdities which he shews that the Cartesian doctrine will lead to:

1^o Granting that the soul thinks while the man sleeps, we can scarcely deny that it has the usual concomitants of thought, pleasure or pain, happiness or misery, according to the nature of its speculations. If we look further, and consider it as a moral agent, it has its duties and sins, and its merits and demerits, and is entitled to rewards, and obnoxious to punishment. Of all this the sleeping man is perfectly unconscious, and therefore is not answerable for it. Thus, to all intents and purposes, the

soul and the man are two distinct beings, the soul as a moral agent to be disposed of, and judged by circumstances, which the man has no more consciousness of, nor responsibility for, than Socrates had of or for the thoughts or deeds of Des Cartes himself. Thus personal identity is confounded.

The answer, that men are conscious of the process of thought during sleep, but immediately forget it, Locke rejects as a gratuitous assumption, and which in itself is in the highest degree improbable.

2^o Granting that the soul thinks while man sleeps, the thoughts ought to be more rational than while the man wakes, for then the thinking being is, as it were, disengaged from, and disencumbered of the material being, and therefore the thoughts should be more clear and elevated, and the conclusions and reasonings more valid. But whenever our sleeping thoughts (dreams) are remembered, they are always on the contrary found to be incoherent, absurd and extravagant.

3^o Granting that the soul thinks while the man sleeps, and yet totally forgets its thoughts, such thinking is utterly useless. This contradicts that economy of nature by which she does nothing in vain, much less does she create one of the noblest faculties to be expended for no purpose.

4^o Granting that the soul thinks while the man sleeps, if it be answered, that the ideas are forgotten, because the bodily organs not being employed in this thinking, no impressions are left, and consequently no memory of such thoughts; it may be replied, that it is quite as easy to suppose the soul to retain its ideas without the help of the organs, as to receive and contemplate them.

5^o Granting that the soul thinks from the first moment of its creation, and before it has received ideas from the senses, it must have ideas not derived from sensation or reflection: of such ideas we find no trace.

LECTURE III.

Ideas, simple and complex.—Division of simple Ideas.

1. **HAVING** first divided our ideas as they enter the mind, into those of sensation and reflection, Locke next viewing them in another respect, divides them into *simple* and *complex*.

He defines a simple idea to be “one uniform and uncompounded appearance or conception in the mind, which is not distinguishable into DIFFERENT ideas.”

We have rendered the word “different” here emphatical, because the definition has been frequently misconceived, by substituting the word “several” in its place. Our author extends the name “simple idea” to certain classes of ideas which are separable into “several” ideas, provided all those ideas be of the “same kind.” Thus, for example, the idea of a straight line of the length one foot, is a simple idea, although it may be resolved into twelve ideas, or rather into twelve repetitions of the same idea of a straight line of the length one inch. This should be the more particularly observed, as some who wrote against the Essay shortly after its publication, fell into the same error, and were refuted by Locke merely by shewing that he used the word “different,” and not “several,” in his definition. Complex ideas are those which are made up of several ideas.

2. We have before observed that Locke uses his words loosely and unsteadily, and certainly without that exact attention to correctness which the nature of his subject required. This defect is doubly objectionable in one who promulgates *new* doctrines, as his readers have no other guide in that case than his own definitions and reasonings. The use of the terms simple and complex ideas, is an instance of an apparent vacillation in the mind of our author, as to the exact signification of his terms. By his definition of simple ideas, he expressly includes those ideas which are compounded of the same idea; as in the instance already cited; and in Ch. XII. of the second book he makes "simple modes" one of the classes of complex ideas. His definition of "simple modes" is "those complex ideas which are only variations or different combinations of the same simple idea, without the mixture of any other." Here these ideas are expressly made *complex* ideas; and they are *simple* ideas according to his own definition. Again he changes his meaning in Chap. XV. Book 2d, when speaking of the simple modes of duration and space, "their parts being all of the same kind, and without the mixture of any other idea, hinder them not from having a place amongst our simple ideas." It will be observed that the very words of his definition of the class of *complex* ideas, called simple modes, are here used to prove that simple modes are *simple* ideas. On the whole, our author's meaning seems to be this:—

1^o Ideas which have no manner of composition whatever, whether of ideas of the same, or different kinds, come decidedly under the class of simple ideas, and no other.

2^o Ideas which are compounded of the same simple idea (simple modes), though in a strictly literal sense they are complex ideas, yet our author generally refers them to the class of simple ideas, and speaks of them as such. In doing so, however, he does not set

aside all notice of their composition, but on the other hand has occasion frequently to introduce it into his reasoning.

3^o Ideas which are compounded of different simple ideas, come decidedly under the class of complex ideas, and no other.

3. The power of the mind over its ideas is compared by Locke to that which we possess over the elements of matter. In this comparison the elementary parts of matter are considered analogous to our *simple* ideas, and masses of matter of various figures, &c. are analogous to our *complex* ideas. He compares them in five respects:

1^o As we possess the power of uniting together the parts of matter so as to form combinations in endless variety, so also we possess the power of uniting, in ways infinitely various, our simple ideas, so as to, form complex ones.

2^o As we possess the power of comparing together collections of matter in various respects, so also we possess the power of comparing our ideas from which arises that class of ideas called relations.

3^o As we possess the power of dividing the parts of bodies so as to obtain any proposed part separately from the others, so also we possess the power of resolving our complex ideas into parts, so as to be able to consider any part separately from the others, from which arises abstract ideas.

4^o As we do *not* possess the power of creating a particle of matter, so neither do we possess the power of creating a simple idea not derived from sensation or reflection.

5^o As we do *not* possess the power of destroying a particle of matter, so neither do we possess the power of destroying any simple idea.

4. In the perception of simple ideas of sensation, the mind is perfectly passive, and cannot refuse to have, nor

can it alter the simple idea derived from any sensible object affecting the proper organ. This passiveness Locke illustrates by the images of objects placed before a mirror. There is, however, this difference, as we shall see hereafter. The "images" or ideas in the mind, and the objects which produce them, have no resemblance whatever. With respect to the ideas of reflection, it may be questioned whether the mind is passive in the reception of these. Locke declares that they require *attention*, and attention is not a passive faculty.

5. One of the peculiarities of simple ideas is, that their names do not admit of definition. A definition is the explanation of a word by several others not synonymous with the word defined, nor with each other. A simple idea not being compounded of *different* ideas, cannot be expressed by several words *not synonymous*, and therefore cannot, properly speaking, be defined. There are, however, three ways whereby the significations of the names of simple ideas may be communicated.

1^o. By a synonymous word.

2^o. By *naming* the subject in which the quality subsists.

3^o. By *shewing* the subject in which the quality subsists.

Thus if the object of the colour we wish to express be not present, we say peach-colour, slate-colour, violet-colour, &c.

Though these observations properly respect words rather than ideas, yet, as in discoursing of simple ideas, we shall have occasion to allude to this peculiarity of their names, we thought it necessary to premise this previously.

6. The original conduits, therefore, and the only ones of simple ideas, are the senses. Language can never *communicate* a *new* simple idea. It may *recall* one formerly had by sensation, but here its power over simple ideas terminates. Without the senses we should have no ideas whatever; for, as we have already shown, sensation

must precede reflection. Although *we* cannot have any other ideas than those conveyed by our senses, it does not however follow that other beings may not have ideas for which we have no conduits. To suppose so would be just as unreasonable as for the blind or the deaf to suppose no ideas to enter by the senses of which they are respectively deprived. Of the number of our senses Locke declines giving any opinion, but seems to think that "they may be justly accounted more than the five which are commonly enumerated."

7. Our author next proceeds to a more particular division of our simple ideas "with reference to the ways whereby they make their approaches to our minds." He inadvertently professes here to divide only our "ideas of sensation," whereas the division includes all ideas. This division is sometimes considered therefore inadequate, "the parts containing more than the whole." This however is mere cavilling, and treating as an error what is really only a verbal oversight.

The classes of our simple ideas, divided with respect to their entrance into the mind, are four:

1^o. The ideas which enter by one sense only.

2^o. The ideas which enter by more than one sense (*i. e.* by sight and touch).

3^o. The ideas which enter by reflection only.

4^o. The ideas which enter by both reflection and sensation.

The ideas which chiefly compose the first class may be enumerated as follows:

1^o. Light and colours.

2^o. Tastes.

3^o. Sounds.

4^o. Odours.

5^o. Solidity, temperature, configuration, adhesion, and such like.

8. To enumerate all the simple ideas peculiar to each

sense, would, even were it of any material utility, be impossible; for they have not all names. Were all the varieties of ideas coming under the several classes above mentioned, to be distinctly denominated, names would be endless. One word signifies generally several modes and degrees of the same idea, as sweet and bitter. Instead of attempting to enumerate our simple ideas, and bring them successively under examination, our author selects one of these which he considers most material to his purpose, and which, though a frequent ingredient of complex ideas, is not apt to be particularly noticed. He selects the simple idea, "solidity," probably because it is connected with one of those principles of the Cartesian philosophy, which he proposes to refute.

LECTURE IV.

Solidity.

I. **SOLIDITY** is one of the most familiar of those simple ideas peculiar to the sense of *touch*. The same idea is sometimes expressed by the term, impenetrability. Locke however prefers the former term, and grounds his preference on three reasons:

1^o. Because Solidity is the term in most common use.

2^o. Because Solidity is a positive, and impenetrability a negative term. The idea to be expressed being a positive quality, he thinks it improperly denominated by a negative term.

3^o. He considers that impenetrability is rather a *consequence* of solidity than solidity itself.

2. We have already observed that the names of simple ideas do not admit of definition. Solidity is an instance of this. Locke consequently declines defining it, and the *description* he gives of it, is nothing more than an appeal to the senses. Let us bring together under our view the different attempts at describing this idea, which are scattered throughout this part of his Essay.

"It *arises* from the resistance which we find in body to the entrance of any other body into the place it possesses, till it has left it." Chap. IV. § 1.

"That which thus hinders the approach of two bodies,

when they are moved one towards another, *I call solidity.*"
ib. ib.

———"The idea the most intimately connected with, and essential to body, so as no where to be found or imagined but only in matter." ib. ib.

It is that property by which a body "will for ever hinder any other two bodies that move towards one another in a straight line, from coming to touch one another, unless it moves from between them in a line not parallel to that which they move in." § 2.

"If any one ask me, what this solidity is? I send him to his senses to inform him: let him put a flint or a football between his hands, and then endeavour to join them, and he will know." § 6.

3. Any, or all of these may be received as a description to help the mind of the student to the meaning of the author, but none of them can for a moment stand the test of examination as a definition. We shall not here enter into any metaphysical discussion on the subject, farther than to compare the statement made in the third passage quoted above, with another of our author's statements. In this passage it will be observed, that something beyond mere explanation is contained. It contains a very important metaphysical theorem, scil: That the property by which a body refuses admission to another body into its place until it quits it, is a quality *exclusively* belonging to matter. "It is no where else to be found," nor even possible to be "imagined." We are strongly inclined to think that in writing some parts of the *Essay*, Locke forgot statements which he had made in other parts. We beg to call the attention of the student to the following passages:—

* * * "We never finding, nor conceiving it possible, that two things of the same kind should exist in the same place at the same time, we rightly conclude that whatever exists any where, at any time, excludes all of the same kind, and is there itself alone." Ch. XXVII. § 1.

"For though these three sorts of substances (God, spirits and bodies), as we term them, do not exclude one another out of the same place, yet we cannot conceive but that they must necessarily, each of them exclude any of the same kind out of the same place;" ib. § 2.

Speaking of the mind he says,

* * * As itself is thought to take up no space, to have no extension, so its actions seem to require, &c. &c. B. 2. Ch. IX. § 10.

Speaking of spirits he says,

* * * Each has its determinate time and place of existence, &c. B. 2. Ch. XXVII.

It must appear evident that Locke here ascribes to spirit that quality which is defined "the occupation of space to the exclusion of things of the same kind," and which when found in body is called solidity. And yet he denies to the human mind the same quality, for he says "it takes up no space," that is, it occupies no space. I confess that I cannot understand any thing by "mind," but a spirit; that Being which we have altogether independently of our body, which perceives, remembers, reflects, &c. and Locke declares that this spirit "takes up no space," although in another place he declares that finite spirits *do take up space*, to the actual exclusion of other finite spirits. Besides this, it may be a fair subject of enquiry, what difference does Locke acknowledge between spirits and bodies? Body occupies space, so does spirit. Body excludes body from its place, until it quits it, so also spirit excludes spirit from its place till it quits it. Can the occupation of space belong to a thing which is unextended? If not, then extension is a common attribute of both body and spirit. Body is moveable, so is spirit. Thus he ascribes to spirit a collection of attributes, which differ from the primary attributes of body only in being ascribed to a different being. We are thus driven to the necessity of either acknowledging that spirit

differs from body only in having the attributes of thinking, &c. superinduced upon the primary qualities of body, or of denying to spirit those attributes, which I cannot persuade myself would ever have been ascribed to it, had the absurd consequences to which they lead been detected.

4. Thus by following the reasoning of Locke upon this point, we are driven from absurdity to absurdity. This might easily, however, have been anticipated, as the hypotheses on which he proceeds are actually contradictory. He declares in the clearest and most explicit terms, in one place, that the quality of excluding other things of the same kind from the place it possesses, &c. is exclusively confined to body, and in another states, that it is "impossible to conceive" the same property not to belong to all substances of the same kind, having previously made the *kinds* of substances to be "God, finite spirits and bodies."

5. It is very probable that many of the difficulties in which the subject is thus involved, have arisen from the imperfect definitions given by Locke of the term solidity. It will however be more useful to guard the student against certain senses of that word in which our author does *not* use it, than to enter into any further disquisition as to that sense in which he does use it. There are three commonly received uses of this word, which we may call its popular, physical and mathematical senses.

1^o. In a popular sense *solid* is used to a certain degree synonymously with *hard*. Thus a body is said to be more or less solid than another, according as its parts hold together with a more or less firm cohesion. This differs from the quality intended to be expressed by Locke by the term "solidity," in this respect, that the one quality admits of degrees, the other of none. The one is relative, the other positive. A body of any given species is said to be more or less hard as its parts adhere with a greater or less force or tenacity than those of bodies of that species usually do. Thus if we speak of stones, we

say diamond is hard, sandstone soft; speaking of woods, box is hard, lime soft. Solidity, on the other hand, in that sense in which it is used in the Essay admits of no degrees; the softest body in the universe is not less solid than the hardest. When a body, after impinging upon another, occupies its place, the other body must either have quitted it or not; if it has quitted the place, it is solid, otherwise not. In such a quality it is impossible even to imagine *degrees*.

6. The compressibility of bodies is a phenomenon, which to a first view might appear to evert the hypothesis that all bodies are solid. Compressibility, however, when properly explained, so far from being the opposite of solidity is in some degree a consequence of it. Bodies of finite bulk are composed of small elementary particles of matter, which, though very close in their position, are not in absolute contact; the interstitial spaces, which constitute a part of the bulk or magnitude or volume of the whole body, are called *pores*. Substances are said to be more or less dense as their pores bear a lesser or greater proportion to their volume. The mass of a body is the quantity of particles of matter included in its volume. Compressibility is the effect which is produced, when the volume of a body is diminished without changing its mass. It follows then, admitting the quality of solidity, that the pores must be diminished by exactly the same quantity as the volume. Thus, in the Florentine experiment, if it be admitted that the change of figure of the globe instantly produced the dew upon its surface, and that the quantity of the water which thus forced its way out was exactly equal in volume to the diminution of volume produced by the change of figure, it would then follow that the water was not capable of being compressed by a force equal to that which produced the change of figure in the globe. But whatever might have been the result of this experiment it could neither establish nor subvert the hypothesis that all

