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ART. I.—*Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions, and other Subjects.* The second Edition, revised and enlarged. 8vo. Hunter. London.

IT gives us no ordinary pleasure to find that a second edition has been called for of this very useful volume. It is one of the signs of the times.

One of the most important of the laws of thought, with some of the momentous practical consequences, to which the state of opinions respecting it has been instrumental in giving birth, is the first and principal topic of the work, of which the design is excellent, and the execution more than creditable. A popular manner has been studied by the writer, and with success. The train of thought is simple, without being superficial, and is followed at once with ease and with interest.

Taking belief to signify the state of mind, in regard to propositions, considered as true; and matters of fact, past, present, or future, considered as real, the author proceeds to inquire, whether the mind, when belief is generated in it, is or is not to be considered voluntary.

Generally speaking, belief is the result of evidence. Where there is no evidence, there is no belief. Where there is evidence, there is belief. Evidence admits of degrees; it may be stronger or weaker. In like manner, belief admits of degrees. Belief may be stronger or weaker; and its strength or weakness corresponds to the strength or weakness of the evidence. It is not meant that the same evidence appears always of equal strength to every man: that is very far from being the case; it is far from appearing always of the same strength to the same man. It is meant, however, that, whatever the strength which evidence at any time appears to a man to bear, such at that time is the degree of his belief. The proof is indisputable, because

the view which the mind takes of evidence, and its belief, are only two names for one and the same thing. The feeling of the force of evidence, and belief, are not two mental states; they are one and the same state. A man regards a piece of evidence as convincing: this is but another phrase for saying he is convinced.

In the word evidence, there is an equivocation to which it is necessary to attend, in order to have any chance for clear ideas on the subject.

Sometimes the word evidence means what is calculated to be evidence, whether it is by any mind taken into view as such or not. At other times, we call a thing evidence, only when it is taken into view as such by some particular mind. Many things there are, which would be evidence to your mind, if they were present to it, in a certain way. Not being present to it, they are not evidence to you, how much soever calculated in their own nature to be so, or however strongly they may be evidence to other minds to which they are present in that appropriate mode. Nothing is evidence to any mind till it is taken into view by that mind, along with the point, whatever it is, of which it is evidence. A thing may be calculated to be evidence, without being so, either to you, or to any of your fellow creatures. Nothing is evidence to any man but what is brought home to him. Strictly speaking, therefore, nothing is evidence, but what is regarded and taken into account as such. That which is only calculated to be evidence, is not evidence. It becomes evidence only, when it is surveyed by a mind by which its evidentiary virtue is perceived. That, however, which is only thus calculated to become evidence, is very often called evidence. And, thus, two things, which it is of great importance to distinguish, are confounded under one and the same name; that which is evidence to a man, actually present to his mind, and producing its appropriate effect; and that which is not present to his mind, nor producing any effect. What is evidence to your mind now, because it is present to it, was not evidence to it yesterday, when it had never been present to it. The same thing exists therefore in two states relative to your mind, the state of evidence, and the state not of evidence. It would be very useful to have names to distinguish these two states. In the first it may be called evidence, in the second, it is only matter fit to become evidence. If a short term could be found, to supply the place of this many-worded name, "matter fit to become evidence", it would be very convenient. Our language, which, unhappily, has no future participles, makes it very difficult to frame a good name. Perhaps, as we have made

credential from credence, to answer a very good purpose, namely, to express what is calculated to give credence, so we might use the word evidential, to express a thing calculated to become evidence. Thus we should have two convenient words, evidence, and evidentials; the one to express the thing when considered as evidence, the other to express its character when considered as only fit to become evidence.

We also want a term to express an object, which has not yet become an object of either belief, or disbelief; but may become an object of the one or the other. When believed, it is called an object of belief, when disbelieved an object of disbelief. But what is it to be called, while it is yet an object of neither; and while it is unknown, of which it is fitted to be an object? In that case, it is an object of scepticism—scepticism meaning literally suspense of judgment, till evidence is obtained. And, if scepticism had not a bad meaning attached to it, an object of scepticism would have been a very proper name for the object in question. Let us in this sense suppose an object of scepticism, a mathematical proposition, for instance: by what process does it become an object of belief, or of disbelief? Through the medium of evidentials. Evidentials are not evidence, till they do evidence; that is, effect belief. A demonstration, before it is known, is an evidential; when it becomes known, it is evidence, and the feeling of the evidence is belief.

There is in evidentials, such a thing as a power of becoming evidence; that is of producing belief in the mind that duly appreciates their evidentiary nature.

If there is not this power in evidentials, there is no such thing as truth; for truth is that which there is reason for believing. The reason for believing any thing, is the evidence of it. The reason for calling any thing truth, is because the evidence for believing it is so strong, that it cannot be doubted: that is, the mind cannot forbear believing it, when the evidentials of it are present to the mind.

I believe that the sun exists. That proposition I call a truth. Why? Because when I look at the sun, I have a sensation, which, as an evidential of the sun's existence, renders it impossible for me not to believe his existence.

That the three angles of a rectilineal triangle are equal to two right angles, I call a truth. The reason here also is, that, when I evolve the demonstration, it yields me evidence of the proposition, in other words, produces belief; nor is it possible for me to carry my mind along the demonstration, and resist the belief.

If there is such a thing then, as truth in the world, there is

such a thing as irresistible evidence. But where evidence is irresistible, of course the belief is not voluntary, it is not in the power of the mind to receive, or not to receive it.

That there is in the world truth, certain truth, it is a new thing for the advocates of religion to draw into doubt. This was wont to be their accusation against the sceptics. It is the more to be wondered at, that the rev. Dr. Wardlaw, a clergyman of Glasgow, should have thought it necessary to arraign Mr. Brougham, for declaring, in his "Inaugural Discourse," that when evidence is present to the human mind, belief is not a voluntary, but a necessary consequence.

The rev. Dr. Wardlaw does, in this case, what is so very apt to be done by a man who does not like a certain proposition, and yet sees danger in disavowing it: he both attacks and maintains the doctrine.

First, let us hear what he says in affirmation of it. "I am far," such are his words, "from intending to question the soundness of the axiom, that belief must necessarily correspond with the perception of evidence, it being in the nature of the thing impossible, that the mind should believe otherwise than as evidence is, or is not discerned. It is quite entitled to the designation of an axiom, being a self-evident and indisputable truth." No admission can be more full and unequivocal.

What, then, is the quarrel he has with Mr. Brougham; this, and nothing but this, being the truth which Mr. Brougham has promulgated? "If it be true," says Dr. Wardlaw, "that for his belief, whatever it may be, a man is no more the subject of praise or blame, than he is for a light or a dark complexion, or for the dimensions of his corporeal frame; then it follows, not merely that man should not account to man for his belief, but also, and with equal certainty, that man has no account to render for his belief to God. . . . We dare not hesitate to say that, between this sentiment and the most explicit statements and uniform assumptions of the Bible, there is a fearful contrariety. Our orator and the inspired penman are quite at issue."

But to us it appears, that the inspired penmen are not more at issue with the orator, than they are with the divine. The divine says, "It is quite impossible that the mind should believe otherwise than as evidence is, or is not discerned." Then a man is not responsible for his belief, assuredly; for it does not depend on him, but on the evidence.

What, then, does the divine proceed to prove? That a man is responsible for his belief? No; but for a very different thing; for his mode of dealing with evidence.

It is a very mischievous proceeding, to confound these two

things; and attach, as the reverend author does, to the one, the consequences which belong to the other. From this confusion, the spirit of prosecution derives its principal means of accomplishing its nefarious ends.

For what purpose does the reverend doctor, as if in averting some dreadful evil, put forth all his strength to establish a proposition, which no one in the world ever called in question; that a man may deal fairly, or unfairly with evidence, and may, in dealing unfairly with it, contract various degrees of guilt, from the lowest to the highest, perhaps, which can be imputed to a human being. Surely he does not mean to say, that Mr. Brougham disputes that proposition. Does not Mr. Brougham use the word prejudice, like other men? As often as he does so, he evinces his belief, that men deal unfairly as well as fairly with evidence; and thereby contract guilt, as far as the want of regard to truth implies it.

The quality, then, of the line of conduct pursued on this occasion, is as follows. The odium which would be justly due to any attempt to deny or explain away the criminality which may be involved in dealing unequally, negligently, or dishonestly with evidence, the reverend author endeavours to excite in the highest possible degree. Having done his best to excite this odium, he so frames his language, as to attach it to the proposition maintained by Mr. Brougham. The proposition maintained by Mr. Brougham, is a proposition undoubtedly true, as is affirmed by the reverend author himself, and it is a proposition of the highest possible importance, as all the world must allow. Yet the reverend author does his best to attach odium to this great and salutary truth, and to the man who lent the aid of his powerful name to its dissemination.

We are perfectly satisfied that Dr. Wardlaw has thus deeply sinned in ignorance, and if he had not totally mistaken the nature of his act, would have been one of the last of men to have adopted so reprehensible a proceeding. No declaration against persecution can be more clear and comprehensive than his. "It is a truth," he says, and says honourably to himself, and usefully to the world, "that men *ought* no longer to be led, and it would be a joyful truth, if truth it were, that they are *resolved* no longer to be led, blindfold in ignorance. It is a truth, that the principle which leads men to judge and treat each other, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions, is a vile principle. It is a truth that man should not render account to man for his belief. And, in as far as this is meant to express the grand principle of universal

toleration, there is no length to which I would not cheerfully go along with its eloquent and powerful advocate; the very word, *toleration*, seeing a right to tolerate, supposes the existence of a corresponding right to restrain and coerce, being a term which, in such an application of it, no language ought to retain. Men should be as free to think, as they are free to breathe. I make no exceptions. Let truth defend herself; and defend herself by her own legitimate means. She is well able to do so. Nor does she stand in need of any auxiliary methods, beyond those of fair argument and rational persuasion. Give her an open field, and the free use of her weapons, and she will stand her ground. Legal restraint and suppression have invariably had the effect of giving tenfold prevalence to the dreaded error. And measures of coercion, whilst they have made hypocrites by thousands, have never made, and never can make, one genuine convert to her cause."

A man capable of thus nobly expressing himself, respecting freedom of thought, could not have been betrayed into the exceptionable mode of commenting, which he has thought it his duty to employ, on the language of Mr. Brougham, respecting the great law of belief, had he not, under the influence of a bad habit, which a bad education renders most extensively and most unhappily prevalent, overlooked and neglected the distinction between the impression which the mind receives from evidence, such as it is presented, and the mental process which is subservient to the presenting of it.

The importance of the distinction, thus fatally, and thus frequently overlooked, the consequences attached to its observance, and its non-observance, will amply justify some pains bestowed upon the illustration of it.

First of all, we think it necessary to let Dr. Wardlaw see the opinion entertained by other divines, of the greatest eminence, as well as by philosophers, respecting the impression derived from evidence. In other words, the law of the great mental phenomenon, belief.

We cannot adduce a name of greater authority, than that of the celebrated Dr. Clarke, a man, uniting, in his own person, some of the highest attributes, both of a divine, and a philosopher. The following are two out of many passages, which his voluminous writings afford.

'The eye, when open, sees the object necessarily, because it is passive in so doing. The understanding likewise, when open, perceives the truth of a speculative proposition, necessarily, because the understanding also is passive in so doing. . . . Neither God nor man can avoid seeing that to be true, which they see is true; or judging that to be fit and

reasonable, which they see is fit and reasonable.'—Clarke, *Answer to the First Letter from a Gentleman at Cambridge*.

'Without all dispute, perception of ideas is no action at all. . . . Seeing a thing to be true or false is not an action, nor has any thing to do with the will. . . . Being unable to refuse our assent to what is evidently true, is not an action, but a perception.'—Clarke, *Remarks upon a Book, entitled A Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty*.

In the following passages, we have the sentiments of the great Chillingworth :—

'Perhaps you mean such points of faith, as the person to whom they are proposed understands sufficiently to be truths revealed by God. But how, then, can he possibly choose but believe them? Or how is it not an apparent contradiction, that a man should disbelieve what himself understands to be a truth; or any Christian what he understands or but believes to be testified by God? This indeed is impossible.'—Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants: The Answer to the Preface*.

'If men do their best endeavour to free themselves from all error, and yet fail of it through human frailty, so well am I persuaded of the goodness of God, that if in me alone should meet a confluence of all such errors of all the Protestants in the world, I should not be so much afraid of them all, as I should be to ask pardon for them.'—*Id. Ib.*

'He that would question, whether knowing a thing, and doubting of it; much more, whether knowing it to be true, and believing it to be false, may stand together, deserves, without question, no other answer but laughter. Now, if error and knowledge cannot consist, then error and ignorance must be inseparable. Him that does err, indeed, you can no more conceive without ignorance than long without quantity, virtuous without quality, a man and not a living creature, to have gone ten miles, and not to have gone five, to speak sense and not to speak.'—*Id. Ib.*

The following is from another controversial divine of great eminence, who was not liable to the imputation of yielding any thing willingly to the sceptics :—

'The fundamental error in Mr. Bayle's argument seems to be this: He saw the essential differences of things; he found those differences the adequate object of the understanding; and so too hastily concluded them to be the adequate object of the will likewise. In this he was mistaken: they are, indeed, the adequate object of the understanding; because the understanding is passive in its perceptions; and, therefore, under the sole direction of those necessary differences. But the will is not passive in its determinations; for instance, that three are less than five, the understanding is necessitated to judge, but the will is not necessitated to chuse five before three.'—Warburton, *Div. Leg. B. I. Sect. 4*.

The proof that belief is not voluntary, is well put by Barrow, in his *First Sermon on Faith*; but the passage is too long for

insertion. Instead of it, take the following from a man of great name, and a tract of great merit:—

‘This is the miserable condition of a convict heretic: the punishment which fell on him for expressing thoughts heretical, he must continue to endure for barely thinking; which is a thing not in his own power, but depends on the evidence that appears to him.’—Bishop Hare, *Difficulties and Discouragements which attend the Study of the Scriptures in the way of private Judgment*.

After these specimens of the mode of thinking on this important subject, among rational theologians, we shall present but a few examples from the writings of philosophers, but those men of the highest name, and of no doubtful character in respect to their faith.

‘That a man should afford his assent to that side on which the less probability appears to him, seems to me utterly impracticable, and as impossible as it is to believe the same thing probable and improbable at the same time.’—Locke, *Hum. Underst.* B. IV. Ch. 20. Sect. 15, 16.

‘The mind of man is necessarily passive in two important manners, either as truth, real or apparent, demands its assent; or, as falsehood, real or apparent, demands its dissent. It is in consequence of this passivity of the human mind, which I chuse to call passivity intellectual, that it becomes susceptible of discipline and institution, and thus finds itself adorned (according as it is cultivated) with the various tribes both of arts and sciences.’—Harris’ *Philos. Arrang.* Ch. XI.

This intellectual passivity is completely implied in one of the leading rules of Descartes’ Philosophy. “*Credidi me,*” says he, “*pro regula generali sumere posse, omne id quod dilucidè et distinctè concipiebam verum esse.*” That conception is independent of the will, nobody has disputed. When any conceivable thing is presented to our conception, we can no more avoid conceiving it, than feeling pain when we are hurt.

There are two propositions, therefore, of the greatest certainty, and the greatest importance.

The first is this, that, as the mind is passive in belief, and the will, to use the words of Dr. Clarke, has nothing at all to do with it, neither merit nor demerit can ever be ascribed to belief, without the utmost confusion of ideas, and the risk of a deplorable train of the most immoral consequences.

The second is, that, as the mind is not passive in what it does relating to evidence, but has all the activity which is implied in its most voluntary exertions, merit or demerit may be justly ascribed to it.

On his mode of dealing with evidence, the good or evil application of the powers of the man, in other words, the greatest possible degree either of virtue or of vice, almost wholly depends.



The evidence of this proposition is short and conclusive. The outward acts of the man follow the inward acts of the will; the acts of the will follow the last determinations of the understanding; the determinations of the understanding follow the evidence present to the mind. The outward acts of the man, therefore, are all precisely such as the evidence which he has in his contemplation determines them to be.

Proper dealing with evidence consists of two things. First, the full collection of it: secondly, the equal reception of it.

With regard to the first, it is knowledge that is concerned. With regard to the second, it is fairness.

*Fulness of Collection.*—1. When a man gives himself no concern about evidence, he remains in voluntary ignorance. The degree of criminality which is involved in this, admits of all degrees, according to the nature of the case. Where it is of little importance, whether a man is or is not ignorant, very little blame can attach to his ignorance; where it would be impossible for him to acquire knowledge, however important, without neglecting it where it is still of greater importance, ignorance may deserve praise rather than blame. There are cases, however, in which voluntary ignorance implies the greatest wickedness; and a habit of voluntary ignorance, a habit, to a certain degree predominant, of indifference to evidence on important points, implies one of the most odious and disgusting states of intellectual and moral depravity.

*Equality of Reception.*—2. The criminality of unfairness, also, of course admits of degrees, according to the less or greater importance of the occasion on which it is incurred. The nature of the offence, in a general way, is sufficiently suggested by the name. It consists in leaning too much to one side. The opposite virtue consists in having no leaning to either side.

What is included in this? Two things are included. The first is, that we have no affection to the one side more than the other. The second is, that we bestow equal attention upon the evidence on both sides.

1. First, it is required that we have no affection to the one side more than the other. When there is an affection to the one side, a wish that the truth should be found on that side, a wish that it should not be found on the other, the weaker evidence on the favourite side produces more impression, than the stronger evidence on the other. By what delusive process of the mind this unhappy effect is produced, we shall by and by explore. At present we have to do with the certainty of the fact, and the extent of its influence.

A man must have looked abroad upon the world to very little

purpose, who has not observed how invariably every class of men have provided themselves with a set of opinions, grounded upon the feelings connected with their own interests, and not upon the evidentials of the case. The aristocratical class have opinions of a superiority inherent in themselves; and inferiority inherent in the other classes. Wherein consists the pride of birth? Whence arises the belief of something noble or ignoble in the blood, with all the practical feelings which result from it, and all the great consequences on life of which such feelings are the proximate cause?

Whence are derived that remarkable class of opinions which are held by the white masters respecting their black slaves, in the West Indies, and in America? The opinion of the utter degradation of the sable race; the opinion of such a superiority in the fair race, that any the smallest tinge in the blood of an individual, whatever his worth, whatever even his riches, makes him unfit to associate with one whose veins contain the European liquid in elevating, ennobling purity?

How difficult is it to find a man who does not over estimate the importance of the particular faculty in which he excels? Look at the tribe of lawyers, the class who hire their tongues as readily to promote what is iniquitous and cruel, as what is just and humane. Their self-importance rises to the ridiculous: were it not for them, the race of men, they tell us, could hardly exist.

What need to speak of the exaggerations of the clergy, in magnifying their own importance, and that of the services which they render to the rest of men?

How excessive the over-estimate which a fond mother commonly makes of the perfections of her child! How blind to its defects; how possessed with every point of its excellence!

Every body can adduce sufficient cases to show what sport the affections make with the understanding, and has observed how small the number of human creatures whose decisions can be depended upon whenever the affections interfere with the judgment.

Practically speaking, therefore, it is never safe to come to the examination of any question, without a strict examination of the affections. When we proceed to the investigation of any question, the first thing required is, a process of self-examination. Have I any affection on either side? If not, I may safely proceed to ascertain and weigh the evidentials on both sides. If, however, the result of the self-examination is, that I have an affection on the one side, and none on the other, what must I do? The proper plan would be, if it could be

done, to abolish the affection on that side ; and so come to the study of the question free from affection on either side ; or, if this could not be done, to raise, if it were possible, an equal affection on the other side. If it were the question for a fond mother to decide, whether her own or another child were the most amiable, it would be necessary, for a fair decision, either that she should divest herself, for the time, of her peculiar affection to the one side, or put on an equal affection for the other. This generally is impossible ; and then, there is only one other resource, that of making an allowance for the efficacy of the affection. As evidence which favours an affection, of equal force with evidence which makes against it, appears of greater force to the mind which is under the influence of the affection, it is necessary to such a mind, if it would be fair, to allow greater weight to the evidence opposite to the affection than it seems to have, and less to that which favours it. Thus, if it appears that the evidence which makes against the affection, and that which makes in its favour, are of equal force, we ought to conclude that the evidence which makes against it is the stronger. If a fond mother sees another child which she thinks equally admirable with her own, she may be very sure that it is better.

This virtue, of coming to the examination of all questions with an equality of affection, is what Mr. Locke recommends so strongly, under the name of Indifferency. " We should keep," he says, " a perfect indifferency for all opinions, nor wish any of them true, or try to make them appear so ; but, being indifferent, receive and embrace them, according as evidence, and that alone, gives the attestation of truth."

" He that, by an indifferency for all but truth, suffers not his assent to go faster than his evidence, nor beyond it, will learn to examine, and examine fairly, instead of presuming."

" In any other way but this, all the world are born to orthodoxy. They imbibe at first the allowed opinions of their country and party, and so, never questioning their truth, not one of an hundred ever examines."\*

2. In fair dealing with evidence, the next thing implied is, that equal evidence, on the different sides, should be treated as equal, that is, have equal effects. This second condition of fair dealing is substantially included in the first ; though for facilitating conception, we have thought it expedient to treat of them as two separate things.

It is only necessary to remind the reader of the share which attention has in the effect which is produced by evidence. If evidence is not attended to, it is the same thing as if it did not

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\* Locke, on the Conduct of the Understanding.

exist. If a very slight degree of attention, a degree just bordering upon no attention at all, is bestowed upon an article of evidence, the impression produced must be nearly the same as none at all. And if we reflect upon each degree of attention from the weakest to the strongest, we shall be easily convinced that the effect of the evidence must follow the degree of attention.

The point which we desire to illustrate becomes, therefore, exceedingly distinct. Suppose that there is a certain quantity of evidence on each of the two sides of a certain question; but that strong attention is bestowed upon the evidence on the one side, the slightest attention only allowed to that on the other, every body knows the consequence. Let the evidence which is slighted be to almost any degree the strongest in its own nature, that is, calculated, if equal attention were bestowed upon it, to produce the strongest effect, it will nevertheless produce the weakest; and the balance of proof will, contrary to all just appreciation, appear to be on the other side.

What that process of mind is, which is here denominated attention, and with which the effect to be produced by evidence has so great a concern, though familiar to every body, it is not easy to explain philosophically, without a greater degree of subtlety, than suits the cursory reading generally bestowed on a Review.

Every body is aware that the affections have a great share in it; and this it is which made us say, in commencing the elucidation of this second part of the fair dealing with evidence, that it was, to a great degree, involved in the first.

It is a common expression, that the affections rivet the attention. It is well known that an object greatly beloved cannot be excluded from the mind. It is said to engross the mind, to haunt the mind. Every thing serves to recall it. The mind loves to revolve it; takes it to pieces; looks at every part of it separately, and combines them anew.

To say that interest has a great share in fixing the attention upon the evidence on one side, rather than the other, is, in fact, but saying that the affections do so; since what are the affections, if not the feeling of a particular interest? yet it is necessary to mention interest separately, as in the sense in which it is here used, it is a very remarkable modification of affection. We are said to feel an interest in a thing, when it is a remote cause of our pains or pleasures. We say we have an affection for what is a proximate cause.

Now, then, what is the process, not difficult to conceive, however rarely practised, which takes place, when the mind makes an exertion, as we phrase it, to counteract those mis-

guiding influences ; and, in spite of them, bestows an equal attention on the evidence on both sides ? Of course it does so, because it has a motive. It loves truth, it loves fairness, and it makes to itself a greater interest in the pursuit of truth, and practice of fairness, than in any thing which it would gain by the violation of them. As a motive is nothing but another name for an interest, a name for an interest, connoting the view which at the instant is taken of it by the mind, it is easy to see what happens. When the mind bestows an equal attention upon the evidence on both sides of a question, by that victory over affection and interest, which is one of the noblest exertions of virtue, because it is the source from which almost every laudable action proceeds, it does so by creating to itself a counteracting interest ; the interest of truth and fairness. This is the tutelary principle. This is the safeguard of virtue. If a man loves truth and fairness more than he loves either side, he will inquire and judge virtuously. If he loves either side better than he loves truth and fairness, he is ready to decide dishonestly, whether he himself is aware of it, or not.

This analysis has, then, led us to something practical, in the most interesting sense of the word.

As virtue consists in the steadiness and constancy of righteous action, and as that facility and proneness on which steadiness and constancy depend, are the result of habit, so faithfulness in regard to evidence, that is, the faithful pursuit of full evidence, with equal affection to both sides of the question, and equal attention to the evidence on both, will only be steady and constant, when the habit is acquired.

Let us bestow a few reflections upon the two opposite habits, the habit of good behaviour towards evidence, and the habit of bad behaviour. Of bad behaviour, the first part is, negligence with regard to evidence ; feeling little concern about the grounds of one's opinions ; letting belief come into the mind, and establish itself there, more by accident than judgment ; taking up the opinions that are current, or fashionable, with hardly any knowledge of their evidence, or much concern whether they are founded on evidence or not.

This habit of forming opinions, and acting upon them without evidence, is one of the most immoral habits of the mind. Only observe what it imports. As our opinions are the fathers of our actions, to be indifferent about the evidence of our opinions is to be indifferent about the consequences of our actions. But the consequences of our actions are the good and evil of our fellow-creatures. The habit of the neglect of evidence, therefore, is the habit of disregarding the good and evil of our fellow-

creatures. It is the habit of hard-heartedness, and cruelty, on the largest scale, and rooted in the deepest part of the mind. This habit is the foundation of most of what is vicious and degraded in human character. The habit of disregarding the evidence of our opinions, with the habit necessarily involved, of disregarding the consequences to our fellow-creatures, of the actions founded upon those opinions, are the elements of a character, in which the general temptations to vice operate without any counteracting motive; and as such a man is essentially without virtue, so it must be by a rare concurrence of accidents, if he is not deep in vice.

Seeing the malignant nature of this habit, it is a melancholy reflection, that it is the general habit of mankind, and of none more than of our dear countrymen. How rare is it to meet with a man, who has almost ever concerned himself about evidence; who has not adopted opinions, as he has adopted words, solely because they were used by other people? This is a dreadful vice of education. One of the grand objects of education should be, to generate a constant and anxious concern about evidence; to accustom the mind to run immediately from the idea of the opinion to the idea of its evidence, and to feel dissatisfaction till it is known that the evidence has been all before the mind, and fairly weighed. When the case is directly the reverse, when the habit is almost universal, of stopping at the opinion, without going on to a thought of the evidence, without an association of any the smallest feeling of dissatisfaction with an opinion the evidence of which has not been explored, we may be perfectly sure that education in that country is in the wrong hands, and that it is nearly in its most deplorable state.

The effects are dreadful. How, but for the habit, almost general, of neglecting and disregarding evidence, could the progress of mankind in improvement be so very slow? How else could errors, of the grossest as well as most pernicious kind, be propagated, and the abominable actions which are grounded upon them, be repeated, from generation to generation? How could institutions, at variance with the interests of the community, which are a mockery of human nature, and act as a pestilential atmosphere upon the race, hold their endless existence, if the human mind was not ruined by the habit of adopting opinions, without evidence?

If such are the deplorable consequences of the vile habit of neglecting evidence, the consequences of the opposite habit, of being on the alert for evidence, of never yielding assent without having it, are of the most salutary kind. Strength and soundness of mind are so essentially connected with it, that they cannot

exist without it. How can there be strength or soundness of mind, without the habits on which they depend? Virtue of every kind springs readily from this soil, and can be planted in no other. The regard to evidence, as we have said before, implies regard to the good and evil of mankind. Regard to evidence, and the strength of mind, of which it is the foundation, necessarily lead to the discovery of error, and the discredit of institutions not useful but hurtful to mankind. What a debt of gratitude should we therefore owe to an education which would implant this habit; what detestation do we owe to an education which implants the opposite!

Such are the opposite habits, the habit of virtue, and the habit of vice, in regard to the search and collection of evidence. The habits of equal and partial affection come next for consideration.

On this subject it is not necessary we should bestow many words. All the benefit of having evidence is lost, if it comes into a mind prepared to make a bad use of it. Of course, all the evil consequences which attach to the negligence of evidence, attach to the habit of partial affection, and something more. The habit of attaching one's self to one side of a question, is a habit of misjudgment. This implies mental imbecility. The affection which is felt for one side of a question, is an affection grounded upon those narrow and personal considerations, which are called selfish, in the immoral and hateful sense of the word; because the interests of truth and fairness include every thing that is large and generous; the habit, therefore, of partial affection to one side of a question, is a habit of confirmed selfishness and immorality. By the habit of believing whatever a man wishes to believe, he becomes, in proportion to the strength of the habit, a bad neighbour, a bad trustee, a bad politician, a bad judge, a shameless advocate. A man whose intellect is always at the command of his sinister interest, is a man whose conscience is at the command of it.

The sphere in which this habit operates the most mischievously is that of the opinions favourable to the interests of the powerful classes of the community, and hostile to those of the community at large. Individuals of the powerful classes, like other individuals, feel attachment to their own side of every question, and when that propensity is not corrected by a good education, but confirmed into a habit, and even erected into a principle, by a bad education, as it is in this country, the consequences are, what we see, an utter incapacity, almost universal, among the individuals of whom the leading classes are composed, of fair reasoning on all the points wherein the

interests of the community are concerned. When to this is joined the habit, in the body of the people, of inattention to evidence, of taking opinions upon trust, and taking upon trust the opinions chiefly of those same leading classes, we see how naturally all the mischievous institutions in the world, and all the mischievous opinions which yield them support, derive their hateful durability from habits of misconduct in relation to evidence.

Having now shewn to Dr. Wardlaw, and to persons of his description, somewhat more clearly than they generally understand the matter, wherein consists the grand virtue of proper conduct towards evidence, and the grand vice of improper conduct, the master virtue, and master vice, of human nature, we have now to show, that, of all classes of men, the clergy are those who are the most deeply chargeable with offences against the virtue, most deeply plunged in the atrocities of the vice.

Let us first of all consider the nature of that constant endeavour of theirs, of which we have already taken some notice, to confound the attributes of belief, with those of the behaviour to evidence; to ascribe to mere belief, the praise or blame, which can alone be due to the mode of dealing with evidence.

Is not this to make a virtue of unfairness? To attach the idea of merit or demerit to belief, that is, of merit to believing one way, demerit to believing another, what is this, but to hold out a premium for partiality, for affection all on one side? This is not merely to offend against the master virtue of right behaviour towards evidence, it is to hire and purchase offences against it.

Why do the clergy follow this course? Why is their praise and blame bestowed upon that which has neither merit nor demerit, belief and disbelief; and withheld from that which may possess the greatest, full and impartial inquiry, or the opposite?

Not only do they attach a merit and demerit to mere belief, they attach consequences of unspeakable importance to the holding or not holding certain opinions; the favour or disfavour of Almighty God, and pains, or pleasures, infinite and eternal. Is it possible, that a mind, with these impressions upon it, can come to the examination of any question, touching those opinions, without affection, so much on one side, that no evidence on the other can have any effect?

Instilling opinions, without the evidence, and at an age when the parties into whom the opinions are instilled, are incapable of understanding the evidence, is a practice which necessarily engenders habits of complicated misconduct towards evidence. It engenders the habit of neglecting evidence, of holding opinions without regard to their evidence: a habit which, as we have said



before, is the natural foundation of all intellectual and moral depravity. It also engenders habits of partial affection. Opinions early established in the mind, and connected with its oldest and most confirmed associations, are regarded as parts of one's-self: one's self-esteem, one's pride, one's love of ease, all create a decided partiality in their favour, and few minds are capable of attending to evidence on the opposite side, or of listening to it, without distaste and resentment. This exceedingly mischievous practice, however, is pursued with zeal, and even set up and applauded as a virtue, by the clergy.

The rank misconduct of the clergy in this respect, and its direful consequences, were pretty fully understood by the sincere and honest mind of Locke.

"There is," says he, "I know, a great fault among all sorts of people, of principling their children and scholars; which, at last, when looked into, amounts to no more but making them imbibe their teachers' notions and tenets, by an implicit faith, and firmly to adhere to them, whether true or false."\*

In another passage, he says, "The business of education, in respect of knowledge, is not, as I think, to perfect a learner in all, or any, of the sciences, but to give his mind that freedom, that disposition, and those habits, that may enable him to attain any part of knowledge he may apply himself to. This, and this only, is well principling, and not the instilling a reverence and veneration for certain dogmas under the specious title of principles, which are often so remote from that truth and evidence which belong to principles, that they ought to be rejected as false and erroneous."†

The following is a highly important passage :

'In these two things, viz. an equal indifferency for all truth; I mean the receiving it in the love of it as truth, but not loving it for any other reason before we know it to be true; and in the examination of our principles, and not receiving any for such, nor building on them, until we are fully convinced, as rational creatures, of their solidity, truth, and certainty, consists that freedom of the understanding, which is necessary to a rational creature, and without which it is not truly an understanding. It is conceit, fancy, extravagance, any thing rather than understanding, if it must be under the constraint of receiving and holding opinions, by the authority of any thing but their own, not fancied but perceived, evidence. This is rightly called imposition, and is, of all other, the worst and most dangerous sort of it. For we impose upon ourselves, which is the strongest imposition of all others; and we impose upon ourselves in that part which ought, with the greatest care, to be kept free from all imposition. The world is apt to cast great blame on those who have

\* Locke, on the Conduct of the Understanding.

† *Ibid.*

an indifferency for opinions, especially in religion. I fear this is the foundation of great error, and worse consequences. To be indifferent which of two opinions is true, is the right temper of the mind, that preserves it from being imposed on, and disposes it to examine with that indifferency, until it has done its best to find the truth, and this is the only direct and safe way to it. But to be indifferent whether we embrace falsehood for truth, or no, is the great road to error. Those who are not indifferent which opinion is true, are guilty of this ; they suppose, without examining, that what they hold is true, and then think they ought to be zealous for it. Those, it is plain, by their warmth and eagerness, are not indifferent for their own opinions, but, methinks, are very indifferent whether they be true or false, since they cannot endure to have any doubts raised, or objections made against them ; and it is visible they never have made any themselves, and so, never having examined them, know not, nor are concerned, as they should be, to know whether they be true or false.

The misconduct of the clergy in relation to evidence, proceeds to a still higher pitch. Not only do they inculcate affection to the one side, and thereby engender habits of unfairness, of that mental imbecility and corruption, which unfit the man for honest inquiry, and leave him without the relish for truth, they do what in them lies to prevent all regard to the evidence on the opposite side, to make those who are led by them purposely shut their eyes against it. They endeavour to frighten them with it. They represent it as dangerous, if not wicked, to look at it. The young and tender mind is carefully discouraged from inquiry. The opinions of the teacher are either to be taken for granted without evidence, or the evidence which he adduces is to be held conclusive, and the very thought of weighing it, or taking into account the weight of opposite evidence, is treated as morally evil.

This vice of the clergy, pregnant with evils of such enormous magnitude, is well touched on by Locke, in the same finely toned and finely moraled discourse.

‘ Many men firmly embrace falsehood for truth ; not only because they never thought otherwise, but also because thus blinded, as they have been from the beginning, they never could think otherwise ; at least, without a vigour of mind able to contest the empire of habit, and look into its own principles ; a freedom which few men have the notion of, in themselves, and fewer are allowed the practice of, by others ; it being the great art and business of the teachers and guides in most sects to suppress, as much as they can, this fundamental duty which every man owes himself, and is the first steady step towards right and truth in the whole train of his actions and opinions. This would give one reason to suspect, that such teachers are conscious to themselves, of the falsehood or weakness of the tenets they profess, since they will not suffer the grounds whereon they are built, to be examined ; when, as those who seek truth

only, and desire to own and propagate nothing else, freely expose their principles to the test, are pleased to have them examined, give men leave to reject them if they can; and if there be any thing weak and unsound in them, are willing to have it detected, that they themselves, as well as others, may not lay any stress upon any received proposition, beyond what the evidence of its truth will warrant and allow.'

There is one passage more in Locke, which, though somewhat long, yet winds up the whole of this important subject, of right dealing with evidence, with such useful reflections, that we need not fear the censure of any honest and rational critic for the space which it will occupy.

'It is mismanagement, more than want of abilities, that men have reason to complain of, and which they actually do complain of, in those that differ from them. He that by an indifferency for all but truth, suffers not his assent to go faster than his evidence, nor beyond it, will learn to examine, and examine fairly, instead of presuming; and nobody will be at a loss, or in danger, for want of embracing those truths, which are necessary in his station and circumstances. In any other way but this, all the world are born to orthodoxy; they imbibe, at first, the allowed opinions of their country and party, and so, never questioning their truth, not one of an hundred ever examines. They are applauded for presuming they are in the right. He that considers, is a foe to orthodoxy, because possibly he may deviate from some of the received doctrines there. And thus men, without any industry, or acquisition, of their own, inherit local truths (for it is not the same every where), and are inured to assent without evidence. This influences farther than is thought; for what one of an hundred, of the zealous bigots in all parties, ever examined the tenets he is so stiff in, or ever thought it his business or duty so to do? It is suspected of luke-warmness, to suppose it necessary, and a tendency to apostacy, to go about it. And if a man can bring his mind once to be positive and fierce for positions, whose evidence he has never once examined, and that in matters of greatest concernment to him, what shall keep him from this short and easy way of being in the right, in cases of less moment? Thus we are thought to cloath our minds as we do our bodies, after the fashion in vogue, and it is accounted phantasticalness, or something worse, not to do so. This custom, which (who dares oppose) makes the short-sighted bigots, and the wariar, scepticks, as far as it prevails. And those that break from it are in danger of heresy; for taking the whole world, how much of it doth truth and orthodoxy possess together? Though it is by the last alone (which has the good luck to be every where) that error and heresy are judged of; for argument and evidence signify nothing in the case, and excuse no where, but are sure to be borne down in all societies, by the infallible orthodoxy of the place. Whether this be the way to truth and right assent, let the opinions that take place, and prescribe in the several habitable parts of the earth, declare. I never saw any reason yet why truth might not be trusted to its own evidence; I am sure if that be not able to support it, there is no fence against error, and then truth and

falsehood are but names that stand for the same things. Evidence, therefore, is that, by which alone, every man is (and should be) thought to regulate his assent, who is then, and then only, in the right way when he follows it.

‘Men deficient in knowledge are usually in one of these three states, either wholly ignorant ; or, as doubting of some proposition they have either embraced formerly, or at present are inclined to ; or, lastly, they do with assurance, hold, and profess, without ever having examined, and being convinced by well-grounded arguments.

‘The first of these are in the best state of the three, by having their minds yet in their perfect freedom and indifferency, the likelier to pursue truth the better, having no bias yet clapped on to mislead them.

‘For ignorance with an indifferency for truth is nearer to it, than opinion, with ungrounded inclination, which is the great source of error ; and they are more in danger to go out of the way, who are marching under the conduct of a guide, that it is an hundred to one will mislead them, than he that has not yet taken a step, and is likelier to be prevailed on to enquire after the right way. The last of the three sorts are in the worst condition of all ; for if a man can be persuaded, and fully assured of any thing, for a truth, without having examined, what is there, that he may not embrace for truth ; and if he has given himself up to believe a lie, what means is there left to recover one who can be assured without examining ?’

Dr. Wardlaw is prodigiously in earnest to convince the world, that the scripture attaches the greatest merit to faith, and the greatest demerit to the want of it. We know not that so much effort, on this subject, was necessary ; but, be that as it may, this at least is certain, that the scripture can inculcate nothing that is absurd in point of reason, or mischievous in point of morality. We have seen that it would be absurd in point of reason, and mischievous in point of morality, to ascribe merit or demerit to belief. This, therefore, is what the scripture cannot do. We have seen that it is most true, in point of reason, and sound in point of morality, to ascribe merit and demerit, even the highest, to the proper and improper modes of dealing with evidence. The consequence is inevitable. It is not belief which is called, in the scripture, faith, but the proper mode of dealing with evidence. The man who deals properly with evidence, is the man who has faith ; the man who deals improperly with it, is the man who is without faith. Now, it is possible, though not very common, for a man to deal faithfully with evidence, doing his utmost to have it fully before him and to guard his mind from bias to either side, and yet to come to the wrong conclusion. It is also very possible, and unhappily very common, that a man who has never given himself any concern about evidence, and who has never been without so determined a partiality to one side, and antipathy to the other, as to

exclude even the approach to his mind of any evidence on the side which he dislikes, should hold the right opinion. Notwithstanding this, the former is the man who has the merit of dealing virtuously ; the latter is the man who has the demerit of dealing wickedly with evidence. Here the man who has the wrong opinion, is the man who has faith, according to the scripture ; the man who has the right opinion, is the man who, be the opinion what it may, is destitute of faith. Faith, in short, has nothing to do with creeds. Of two men, the one even an atheist, the other a sound believer, it may be, that the atheist is the man who has faith, according to the scripture ; that the sound believer is the man who is destitute of faith, according to the scripture ; that the atheist is possessed of all the merit, the sound believer of all the demerit, which the scripture ascribes to the possession, or the want, of that saving grace. As we have shown, that, of all classes of men, the clergy, as a class, are the most constant and the deepest offenders against the virtue of dealing rightly with evidence, it follows, that of all classes of men living, the clergy are the most remarkably destitute of faith, in other words, are of all men living, the greatest infidels.

We have dwelt at such length upon this topic, because it is necessary to complete the doctrine which the author of the work before us has so usefully recommended to public notice, and which, as far as he has proceeded, he has illustrated with the greatest skill. In his next edition, which the public, we fondly hope, will soon call for, we would recommend it to him, to add to the proof and illustration of what takes place in mere belief, the proof and illustration of what is implied in the proper mode of dealing with evidence, than which nothing of greater importance, as concerns the progress either of intellect or morality, can be forced upon the public attention. It is indeed true, that he has not entirely overlooked the subject ; for in the section in which he treats of " Belief and Opinion as objects of moral approbation and disapprobation," he has adduced several of the more important ideas ; but still he has not discussed it in that systematical manner which is calculated to make the deepest impression, and which the importance of the consequences deserves.

The next essay in the work, is the practical improvement of the foregoing, and intended to show that the free publication of opinions is favourable to the interests of truth, and of human happiness ; that all restraints upon publication are hostile to those great interests. This subject we have so recently had occasion to discuss, that we have little more to do, on this occasion, than express our concurrence with the opinions of the author, and our approbation of the manner in which he has explained and enforced

them. Few things we should more rejoice to hear, than that this little essay were in the hands of every individual in the island, capable of reading it.

The essay "on Facts and Inferences," exposes briefly, but well, the common and highly mischievous propensity to mistake inferences for facts; and marks a very conspicuous and forward class of men, the class who title themselves "matter-of-fact-men," but of whom the proper name would be "bad-inference-men."

"The Influence of Reason on the Feelings" is an essay rather more of a common-place description, showing the extensive and mischievous sway of irrational associations, created by a bad education, or vices in the social order, and the use of reason in overcoming them.

A case of practical morality is the subject of the next two essays, "On the Dependence of Causes and Effects in Moral Conduct." It is a case to which it is of great importance to draw the attention of mankind, who, though they do not expect effects without their causes in the physical world, are very prone to do so in the moral. How many men expect to become wise without the trouble of acquiring knowledge, rich without frugality or industry, respected without knowledge and virtue, and happy while they are doing what is calculated to destroy their happiness?

The essay "On the Causes and Consequences of Individual Character," has but little of the merit which characterizes the preceding. It is vague, and the author has arrived at some of the conclusions with great facility, because he has leaped over the evidence.

We ascribe little merit to the essay "On the Vicissitudes of Life." Rather, we ascribe to it a good deal of demerit. The tendency of what is adduced, is to show that the difference in point of happiness or misery, consists in the transition from state to state, little or nothing in the states themselves, as if there were little to choose between griping poverty, and wealth, between the dread of want and security of affluence; as if hard labour, daily renewed, were not a pain, and one of the heaviest of pains. As sagely might a man tell us that the agony of a stone in the bladder, because it is habitual, is hardly to be distinguished from the state of pleasure or ease. It is surprising to find an author, who shows so much of the power of comprehensive reflection on some subjects, so inconsiderate as to be even vulgar on others.

We recognise our author again in the essay "On the Variety of Intellectual Pursuits." The reflections are those of an ingenious mind, and have the best possible tendency.

The essay "On Practical and Speculative Ability" is not without merit, though none of the observations is very profound and some of them are not perfectly accurate. Thus, in distinguishing practical from speculative ability, he tells us, that practical "has reference to the application of knowledge," as if speculative ability did not consist in the application of knowledge. This shows that the author had no distinct conception of the difference between the two.

The tendency of the essay, which closes the volume, "On the Mutability of Human Feelings," is good. After an exhibition of the changes which take place in the likings and dislikings, the desires and hopes, the aversions and fears of every individual, notice is taken of the infirmity of those who have this mutability in excess, and are called fickle; a character hurtful to the possessor, and hurtful to those with whom he has to do.

The additions which are made to this edition of the present work, are placed as notes at the end of the volume; and of these the most important by far is NOTE E, in which the author controverts a memorable position, maintained by the Edinburgh Reviewers, and which they say they "may assume as established and undeniable, that there is nothing in the nature of truth which makes it necessarily good." The course which the Reviewers pursue, to show that there is nothing in the nature of falsity which makes it necessarily bad, would show that there is nothing in the nature of theft or murder which renders them necessarily bad. We have here a specimen of the vagaries of periodical publications, the main purpose of which is to be largely sold. This same review, which maintains, on occasion, that truth is not necessarily good, and honesty is not necessarily good, because it can fancy cases in which more happiness would be gained than lost by the violation of them, does yet manfully deny, that the principle of utility and the principle of morality are the same.

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ART. II.—*Narodne Srpske Pjesme, skupio i i svijet isdao Vuk Stephanovich Karatzich, (Iadranin is Trshicha a od starine Drobñak is Petnitze &c.) u Lipistzi, 1823-4. Popular Servian Songs, collected and published by Vuk Stephanovich Karatzich, &c. Leipzig. 3 vols. 8vo.*

WE think it is a very interesting and a very delightful thing to be enabled to share in the sympathies, and to understand the habitual thoughts and feelings of any large portion of our fellow men; to watch the dawn and progress of civilization among