

from any doubtful train of reasoning, but forced on men by the very condition of their existence.

In following up the manly studies of this place, we ought to read the classic page, not merely to kindle delightful emotions—to gratify the imagination and the taste—but also to instruct the understanding; and to this end the philosophical and ethical works of the ancients deserve a much larger portion of our time than we have hitherto bestowed on them. It is indeed notorious, that during many past years, while verbal criticism has been pursued with so much ardour, the works to which I now allude (coming home, as they do, to the business of life; and pregnant, as they are, with knowledge well fitted to fortify the reasoning powers) have, by the greatest number of us, hardly been thought of; and have in no instance been made prominent subjects of academic training. The classical writers did not cultivate the imagination only; but they saw deep into the springs of human thought and action: and rightly apprehending the capacities of man and their bearing on social life, they laid the foundation of their moral systems in the principles and feelings of our nature, and built thereon a noble superstructure. Should any one object to these ancient systems (as Paley and many other writers have done), and tell us that they are obscure, indefinite, and without sanction: we might reply, that in every question, even of physical science, we take but a few steps towards a first cause, before we are arrested by a boundary we cannot pass—before we are encompassed with a darkness no eye can penetrate:—that in moral questions (founded, not on the properties of material agents, which we can examine and sift, again and again, by new experi-