

brute passion—habitually disregarding others, and seeking only his own sensual gratification. In calling such a one selfish we use a term of unqualified reproach; and he stands convicted, not merely by our own moral judgment, but by the recorded sentence of every age and country. Another may be selfish in a different way. He may seek some end his natural feelings and his reason pronounce to be good; but he seeks that end immoderately, and without reference to the well-being of his fellow-men. Such a man is called selfish, when we estimate his life by that perfect rule which tells him to love his neighbour as himself; or even when we try his motives by the humble standard exhibited in the conduct of the world; and in the latter case, though the word selfish be used only in a relative sense, it is still adopted by us as a term of reproach.

But if selfish passions have exercised a predominating influence over the conduct of mankind; there are other motives in our moral nature, leading to acts of self-denial, and to ends connected only with the good of others. Benevolent affection—a desire for the well-being of others, is a natural feeling of the soul, and even the basest of mankind will sometimes manifest its partial influence. It comes not by teaching, for it is perhaps first seen as a mere animal instinct: neither is it the fruit of reason or calculation; for however choked it may be, in common cases, by our baser passions, and kept down by motives returning only into self; it sometimes becomes a strong predominating feeling, leading us into acts contrary both to reason and our worldly interest. Can we then, without a gross abuse of words, confound acts originating in bene-