

tially practical; and it must be applicable to some real condition of society, or it is worse than nothing. And most strange and mischievous is that philosophy, which, in considering the stability of a state, overlooks that moral friction whereby its social elements are kept in their true position.

Perhaps it may be said, that the preceding observations are mere truisms denied by no one. But, practically, they have too often been contradicted or overlooked; and more, I believe, in modern than in ancient times.

A wide examination of such facts as throw light on the statistical history of mankind, and a laborious observation of the causes regulating the accumulation and distribution of national wealth, are among the circumstances by which modern political philosophy has been most distinguished: and as we believe that the knowledge of truth will always, in the end, minister to the honour and happiness of man, we must, as honest lovers of our neighbour, rejoice in the progress of economical science. The economist is mainly employed in observing and classifying phenomena, from which he deduces consequences that are to him in the place of moral laws. The legislator, on the contrary, assumes the principles he carries into action, applies them to a given condition of society (perhaps never contemplated by the economist), and anticipates the results of moral causes working on new social combinations. Under this view the position of the two philosophers is seen in the strongest contrast. The one, like the early observers of the heavens, marks the phenomena out of which he endeavours to trace the relative position and movements of the great bodies of the social system. The other, more