

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Metaphysics which have been resorted to on the side of Theism.

(MR. HUME'S OBJECTION TO THE A POSTERIORI ARGUMENT, GROUNDED ON THE ASSERTION THAT THE WORLD IS A SINGULAR EFFECT.)

1. THE doctrine of innate ideas in the mind, is wholly different from the doctrine of innate tendencies in the mind—which tendencies may lie undeveloped till the excitement of some occasion have manifested or brought them forth. In a newly formed mind, there is no idea of nature or of a single object in nature—yet no sooner is an object presented, or is an event observed to happen, than there is elicited the tendency of the mind to presume on the constancy of nature. At least as far back as our observation extends, this law of the mind is in full operation. Let an infant for the first time in its life, strike on the table with a spoon; and, pleased with the noise, it will repeat that stroke with every appearance of a confident anticipation that the noise will be repeated also. It counts on the invariableness wherewith the same consequent will follow the same antecedent. In the language of Dr. Thomas Brown, these two terms make up a sequence—and there seems to exist in the spirit of man, not an underived, but an aboriginal faith, in the uniformity of nature's sequences.