

19. Without, therefore, expatiating any farther on the origin of this belief, and certainly without laying the least argumentative stress upon it in the reasonings which we have now to offer—let it suffice for the present that there exists such a belief in our mind, and that it meets with its correspondent reality in nature.

20. There are two processes of inference, which, however identical in their principle, may be distinguished the one from the other. When there is an invariable connexion between certain antecedents and certain consequents—then, upon our seeing the antecedents, we look confidently forward to the appearance of the consequents—or, when we see the consequents, we conclude that their proper antecedents have gone before them. But it may so happen, that various antecedents shall be mingled together at the same time—some of which have an influence upon the result, and some of which have none; but still so as to make it a necessary exercise of mind to disentangle the trains from each other, and to discriminate what be the terms which stand to each other in the strict relation of a sequence that is invariable.

21. But to descend from the obscure language of generalities upon this subject. Let us take the case of a watchmaker, and a watch, the former being the antecedent and the latter the consequent—both of which, and the actual conjunction of which, we have already observed, if we have ever seen a watch made. Now, on looking first to the antecedent, there is room for distinguishing between the proper and the accidental. It were wrong to