

that there appear to be two distinct ways by which an artificer might make manifest the wisdom of his contrivances. He may either be conceived of, as forming a substance and endowing it with the fit properties; or as finding a substance with certain given properties, and arranging it into fit dispositions for the accomplishment of some desirable end. Both the former and the latter of these we ascribe to the Divine Artificer—of whom we imagine, that He is the Creator as well as the Disposer of all things. It is only the latter that we can ascribe to the human artificer, who creates no substance, and ordains no property; but finds the substance with all its properties ready made and put into his hands, as the raw material out of which he fashions his implements and rears his structures of various design and workmanship. Now it is a commonly received, and has indeed been raised into a sort of universal maxim, that the highest property of wisdom is to achieve the most desirable end, or the greatest amount of good, by the fewest possible means, or by the simplest machinery. When this test is applied to the laws of nature—then we esteem it, as enhancing the manifestation of intelligence, that one single law, as gravitation, should, as from a central and commanding eminence, subordinate to itself a whole host of most important phenomena; or that from one great and parent property, so vast a family of beneficial consequences should spring. And when the same test is applied to the dispositions, whether of nature or art—then it enhances the manifestation of wisdom, when some great end is brought about with a less