

and as much to be decided by observation as the nature or properties of any substantive being. It is a Fact which we learn or become acquainted with, just as we become acquainted with the constitution of a watch by the inspection of its mechanism. Conscience in Man is as much a thing of observation—as the regulator in a watch is a thing of observation. It depends for its truth, therefore, on an independent and abiding evidence of its own, under all the diversities of speculation on the nature of Virtue. By the supremacy of Conscience we affirm a truth which respects not the nature of Virtue but the nature of Man. It is, that in every human heart, there is a faculty—not, it may be, having the actual power, but having the just and rightful pretension to sit as judge and master over the whole of human conduct. Other propensities may have too much sway—but the moral propensity, if I may so term it, never can—for to have the presiding sway in all our concerns, is just that which properly and legitimately belongs to it. A man under anger may be too strongly prompted to deeds of retaliation—or under sensuality be too strongly prompted to indulgence—or under avarice be too closely addicted to the pursuit of wealth—or even under friendship be too strongly inclined to partiality—but he never can under conscience be too strongly inclined to be as he ought and to do as he ought. We may say of a watch that its main-spring is too powerful: but we would never say that a Regulator is too powerful. We may complain of each of its other parts that it has too much influence over the rest—but not that the part whose office it is to