

Cicero, we find the impression of at once a righteous and a reigning Sovereign.

16. With this felt Supremacy of Conscience, we cannot rid ourselves of the impression that whatever the actual power or prevalence of vice may be in the world, it is but the tumult and insurrection of lower against higher elements—and that moral rectitude still undislodged from its empire in the pure region of Sentiment and Thought, sits aloft as it were in empyreal dignity; and from an eminence whence no Power in Earth or Heaven can dethrone her, commands the homage of all that is best and worthiest in Nature. When there is war betwixt Opinion and Force, the latter may have the physical ascendancy, yet the former is ever counted the nobler antagonist—and thus it is, that although vice should have enlisted under its standard of rebellion all the families of mankind, there remains the moral greatness of Virtue, as erect in the consciousness of its strength as if it had the public mind of the Universe upon its side. It is difficult to resist the feeling, that amid all the mystery of present appearances, the highest power is at one with the highest principle. And it confirms still more our idea of a government—that conscience not only gives forth her mandates with the tone and authority of a Superior; but, as if on purpose to enforce their observance, thus follows them up with an obvious discipline of rewards and punishments. It is enough but to mention, on the one hand, that felt complacency which is distilled, like some precious elixir, upon the heart by the recollection of virtuous deeds and virtuous sacrifices: