

same action, is just as little to be wondered at as a similar diversity on the material qualities of the same object—should any of the spectators labour under an involuntary defect of vision, or voluntarily persist either in shutting or in averting his eyes. It is thus that a quarrel has well been termed a misunderstanding, in which each of the combatants may consider, and often honestly consider, himself to be in the right; and that, on reading the hostile memorials of two parties in a litigation, we can perceive no difference in their moral principles, but only in their historical statements; and that, in the public manifestoes of nations when entering upon war, we can discover no trace of a contrariety of conflict in their ethical systems, but only in their differently put or differently coloured representations of fact—all proving, that, with the utmost diversity of judgment among men respecting the moral qualities of the same thing, there may be a perfect identity of structure in their moral organs notwithstanding; and that Conscience, true to her office, needs but to be rightly informed, that she may speak the same language, and give forth the same lessons in all the countries of the earth.

20. It is this which explains the moral peculiarities of different nations. It is not that justice, humanity, and gratitude are not the canonized virtues of every region; or that falsehood, cruelty, and fraud would not, in their abstract and unassociated nakedness, be viewed as the objects of moral antipathy and rebuke. It is, that, in one and the same material action, when looked to in all the lights of which, whether in reality or by the power