

of imagination, it is susceptible, various, nay, opposite moral characteristics may be blended ; and that while one people look to the good only without the evil, another may look to the evil only without the good. And thus the identical acts which in one nation are the subjects of a most reverent and religious observance, may, in another be regarded with a shuddering sense of abomination and horror. And this, not because of any difference in what may be termed the moral categories of the two people, nor because, if moral principles in their unmixed generality were offered to the contemplation of either, either would call evil good or good evil. When theft was publicly honoured and rewarded in Sparta, it was not because theft in itself was reckoned a good thing ; but because patriotism, and dexterity, and those services by which the interests of patriotism might be supported, were reckoned to be good things. When the natives of Hindostan assemble with delight around the agonies of a human sacrifice, it is not because they hold it good to rejoice in a spectacle of pain ; but because they hold it good to rejoice in a spectacle of heroic devotion to the memory of the dead. When parents are exposed or children are destroyed, it is not because it is deemed to be right that there should be the infliction of misery for its own sake ; but because it is deemed to be right that the wretchedness of old age should be curtailed, or that the world should be saved from the miseries of an over-crowded species. In a word, in the very worst of these anomalies, some form of good may be detected, which has led to their establishment ;