

such as they are, are in general but momentary. An act of compassion may extinguish for a time the feeling of compassion, by doing away that suffering which is the object of it; but then it generally is followed up by a feeling of permanent regard. An act of revenge, when executed to the full extent of the desire or purpose, does extinguish and put an end to the passion of revenge; and is seldom, if ever, followed up by a feeling of permanent hatred. An act of kindness but attaches the more, and augments a friendly disposition towards its object. It were both untrue in itself, and unfair to our nature to say, that an act of revenge but exasperates the more, and always augments, or even often augments, a hostile disposition towards its object. It has been said that we hate the man whom we have injured: but whatever the truth of this observation may be, certain it is, that we do not so hate the man of whom we have taken full satisfaction for having injured us; or, if we could imagine aught so monstrous, and happily so rare, as the prolonged, the yet unquelled satisfaction of one, who could be regaled for hours with the sighs of him whom his own hands had wounded; or, for months and years, with the pining destitution of the household whom himself had impoverished and brought low: this were because the measure of the revenge had not equalled the measure of the felt provocation, only perhaps to be appeased and satiated by death. This, at length, would terminate the emotion. And here a new insight opens upon us into the distinction between a good and a bad affection. Benevolence, itself of immortal quality,