

we observe that sort of exquisite balancing, which, perhaps more than any thing else, indicates the wisdom and the hand of a master—as if when, in the execution of some very nice and difficult task, he is managing between contrary extremes, or is devising in just proportion for contrary interests. We might better comprehend the design of this strikingly peculiar mechanism, by imagining of the two opposite instincts, that either of them was in excess, or either of them in defect. Did the constitutional modesty prevail to a certain conceivable extent—it might depopulate the world. Did the animal propensity preponderate, on the other hand—it might land the world in an anarchy of unblushing and universal licentiousness—to the entire breaking up of our present blissful economy, by which society is partitioned into separate families, and, with the interests of domestic life to provide for, and its affections continually to recreate the heart in the midst of anxieties and labours, mankind are kept in a state both of most useful activity and of greatest enjoyment. We cannot conceive a more skilful, we had almost said a more delicate or dexterous adjustment, than the one actually fixed upon—by which, in the first instance, through an appetency sufficiently strong, the species is upholden; and, in the second instance, through the same appetency sufficiently restrained, those hallowed decencies of life are kept unviolated, which are so indispensable to all order and to all moral gracefulness among men. We have only to conceive the frightful aspect which society would put on, did unbridled licentiousness stalk at large