

unmolested possession of that which he rightfully claims. The circumstances which originate the sense of property, serve to explain this one fact, the existence of a possessory feeling, in the heart of every individual who is actuated thereby. But the deference rendered to this feeling by any other individuals, is another and a distinct fact; and we must refer to a distinct principle from that of the mere sense of property, for the explanation of it. This new or distinct principle is a sense of equity—or that which prompts to likeness or equality, between the treatment which I should claim of others and my treatment of them; and in virtue of which, I should hold it unrighteous and unfair, if I disregarded or inflicted violence on the claim of another, which, in the same circumstances with him, I am conscious that I should have felt, and would have advanced for myself. Had I been the occupier of that chair, in like manner with the little claimant who is now insisting on the possession of it, I should have felt and claimed precisely as he is doing. Still more, had I like him placed it beside the fire, I should have felt what he is now expressing—a still more distinct and decided right to it. If conscious of an identity of feeling between me and another in the same circumstances—then let my moral nature be so far evolved as to feel the force of this consideration; and, under the operation of a sense of equity, I shall defer to the very claim, which I should myself have urged, had I been similarly placed. And it is marvellous, how soon the hearts of children discover a sensibility to this consideration, and how soon they are capable of