

compassion—that never-failing impellent, in a free and natural state of things, to deeds of charity, for the well-being of the social economy. The evils which have ensued are of too potent and pressing a character to require description. They have placed England in a grievous dilemma, from which she can only be extricated, by the new modelling of this part of her statute-book, and a nearer conformity of its provisions to the principles of natural jurisprudence. Meanwhile they afford an emphatic demonstration for the superior wisdom of nature, which is never so decisively or so triumphantly attested, as by the mischief that is done, when her processes are contravened or her principles are violated.*

7. We are aware of a certain ethical system, that would obliterate the distinction between justice and humanity, by running or resolving the one into the other—affirming of the former more particularly, that all its virtue is founded on its utility; and that therefore justice, to which may be added truth, is no further a virtue, than as it is instraental of good to men—thus making both truth and justice, mere species or modifications of benevolence. Now, as we have already stated, it is not with the theory

* Without contending for the language of our older moralists, the distinction which they mean to express, by virtues of perfect and imperfect obligation, has a foundation in reality and in the nature of things—as between justice where the obligation on one side implies a counterpart right upon the other, and benevolence to which, whatever the obligation may be on the part of the dispenser, there is no corresponding right on the part of the recipient. The proper office of law is to enforce the former virtues. When it attempts to enforce the latter, it makes a mischievous extension of itself beyond its own legitimate boundaries.