

many thousand wills, each bent on the prosecution of its own selfishness, than by the anxious superintendence of a government, vainly attempting to medicate the fancied imperfections of nature, or to improve on the arrangements of her previous and better mechanism. It is when each man is left to seek, with concentrated and exclusive aim, his own individual benefit—it is then, that markets are best supplied; that commodities are furnished for general use, of best quality, and in greatest cheapness and abundance; that the comforts of life are most multiplied; and the most free and rapid augmentation takes place in the riches and resources of the commonwealth. Such a result, which at the same time not a single agent in this vast and complicated system of trade contemplates or cares for—each caring only for himself—strongly bespeaks a higher agent, by whose transcendental wisdom it is, that all is made to conspire so harmoniously and to terminate so beneficially. We are apt to recognise no higher wisdom than that of man, in those mighty concerts of human agency—a battle, or a revolution, or the accomplishment of some prosperous and pacific scheme of universal education; where each who shares in the undertaking is aware of its object, or acts in obedience to some master-mind who may have devised and who actuates the whole. But it is widely different, when, as in political economy, some great and beneficent end both unlooked and unlaboured for, is the result, not of any concert or general purpose among the thousands who are engaged in it—but is the compound effect, nevertheless, of each looking severally, and in the strenuous