

from one understanding to another. And therefore it is, that the faculty of communication by words, with all the power and flexibility which belong to it, by which the countless benefits of human intercourse are secured, and all the stores of sentiment and thought are turned into a common property for the good of mankind, may well be ranked among the highest of the examples that we are now in quest of—it being indeed as illustrious an adaptation as can be named of External and Material Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. Of the converse of disembodied spirits we know nothing. But to man cased in materialism, certain material passages or ducts of conveyance, for the interchange of thought and feeling between one mind and another seem indispensable. The exquisite provision which has been made for these, both in the powers of articulation and hearing, as also in that intermediate element, by the pulsations of which, ideas are borne forward, as on so many winged messengers from one intellect to another—bespeaks, and perhaps more impressively than any other phenomena in nature, the contrivance of a supreme artificer, the device and finger of a Deity.*

5. But articulate and arbitrary sound is not

* It will at once be seen that the same observations may be extended to written language, and to the fitness of those materials which subserve through its means, the wide and rapid communication of human thoughts. We in truth could have multiplied indefinitely such instances of adaptation as we are now giving—but we judged it better to have confined ourselves to matters of a more rudimental and general character—leaving the manifold detail and fuller developments of the argument to future labourers in the field.