

33. Opposed to this array of strength on the side of existing principles, we have the incessant operations of what may be termed the movement party in science or in the literary commonwealth—some of whom are urged onward by the mere love of novelty and change; others by the love of truth; and very many by a sort of ardent and indefinite imagination of yet unreached heights in philosophy, and of the new triumphs which await the human mind in its interminable progress from one brilliant or commanding discovery to another. We have often thought that a resulting optimism is the actual effect of the play or collision that is constantly kept up between these two rival parties in the world of letters. On the one hand it is well that philosophy should not be a fixture, but should at length give way to the accumulating force of evidence. But on the other hand it is well, that it should require a certain, and that a very considerable force of evidence, ere it shall quit its present holds, or resign the position which it now occupies. We had rather that it looked with an air of forbidden authority on the mere likelihoods of speculation, than that, lightly set agog by every specious plausibility, it should open its schools to a restless and rapid succession of yet undigested theories. It is possible to hold out too obstinately and too long; but yet it is well, that a certain balance should obtain between the adhesive and the aggressive forces in the world of speculation; and that the general mind of society should have at least enough of the sedative in its composition, to protect it from aught like violent disturbance,