

these last, his mind free of all innate and all antecedent conceptions, has been often compared to a sheet of blank paper. It is in a state of passiveness, or at most in a state of expectancy—ready to be graven upon by whatever characters may there be inscribed by the hand of a credible and competent informer. This habit of the understanding, of such value in all the sciences, is of inestimable value in theology. Compound in its application, but one and simple in the principle from which it emanates—this habit of decision in regard to all that is known, and of docility in regard to all that is unknown, would at once give steadfastness to our Philosophy and soundness to our Faith.

4. And let it further be remarked of the self-denial which is laid upon us by Bacon's philosophy, that, like all other self-denial in the cause of truth or virtue, it hath its reward. In giving ourselves up to its guidance, we have often to quit the fascinations of beautiful theory; but, in exchange for them, we are at length regaled by the higher and substantial beauties of actual nature. There is a stubbornness in facts before which the specious imagination is compelled to give way—and perhaps the mind never suffers more painful laceration, than, when after having vainly attempted to force nature into a compliance with her own splendid generalizations, she, on the appearance of some rebellious and impracticable phenomenon, has to practise a force upon herself—when she thus finds the goodly speculation superseded by the homely and unwelcome experience. It seemed at the outset a cruel sacrifice, when the world of specu-