

there is nothing actual which He has not decreed and given existence to : and He has permitted evil, because it is enveloped in the best plan which is found in the region of possibles, and that, divine wisdom could not fail to have chosen."—*Essay*, Art. 338.

5. Now it were a hardy thing in a creature of such bounded observation and faculties as man to deny, that, for aught he knows, this may be. We do not want to dogmatize any one into the theory of Leibnitz ; and we think he advances it with a degree of positive confidence in its truth, wherewith we cannot sympathize. We must regard it as an unproved, but still we hold it as available for a precious service in theology, if it be not a disproved hypothesis. We think that Leibnitz has undertaken more than man is able for, in undertaking the burden of its proof ; but we also think, that the antagonist of Leibnitz would undertake more than man is able for, were he to undertake the burden of its disproof. For the accomplishment either of the one or of the other, we must have a power of discovery remounting to the first origin of things in the eternity that is behind, and reaching to their final consummation in the eternity before us. In these circumstances, all we can say of the optimism of Leibnitz is that we do not know. But this is tantamount to saying, that we do not know the evil in the universe to be inconsistent with the goodness and absolute perfection of its author. Hypothesis as it is, it establishes no positive addition to the truths of religion—yet hypothesis though it be, it is all-triumphant in disarming those objec