

ening with every repetition of the process, till at length it advances towards the moral certainty of a helpless surrender to the tyranny of those evil passions, which we cannot resist, just because the will itself is in thralldom, and we choose not to resist them. It is thus that we might trace the progress of intemperance and licentiousness, and even of dishonesty, to whose respective solicitations we have yielded at the first—till, by continuing to yield, we become the passive, the prostrate subjects of a force that is uncontrollable, only because we have seldom or never in good earnest tried to control it. It is not that we are struck of a sudden with moral impotency; but we are gradually benumbed into it. The power of temptation has not made instant seizure upon the faculties, or taken them by storm. It proceeds by an influence that is gently and almost insensibly progressive—just as progressive, in truth, as the association between particular ideas is strengthened by the frequency of their succession. But even as that association may at length become inveterate—insomuch that when the first idea finds entry into the mind, we cannot withstand the importunity wherewith the second insists upon following it—so might the moral habit become alike inveterate; thoughts succeeding thoughts, and urging onward their counterpart desires in that wonted order, which had hitherto connected the beginning of a temptation with its full and final victory. At each re-