

CHAPTER VI.

On those special Affections which conduce to the Civil and Political Wellbeing of Society.

1. THE first step towards the aggregation of men into a community, or the first departure from a state of perfect isolation, could that state ever have subsisted for a single day, is the patriarchal arrangement. No sooner indeed is the infant creature ushered into being, than it is met by the cares and the caresses of those who are around it, and who have either attended or welcomed its entry on this scene of existence—as if, in very proportion to the extremity of its utter helplessness, was the strength of that security which nature hath provided, in the workings of the human constitution, for the protection of its weakness and the supply of all its little wants. That there should be hands to receive and to manage this tender visitant, is not more obviously a benevolent adaptation, than that there should be hearts to sympathise with its cries of impotency or distress. The maternal affection is as express an instance of this as the maternal nourishment—nor is the inference at all weakened, by the attempts, even though they should be successful, of those who would de-