

world—inso much that, under the guardianship of the powers which be, those links of a natural jurisprudence, now irretrievably torn from the former, are at length transferred in all their wonted tenacity to the existing proprietors; rivetting each of them to his own several property, and altogether establishing a present order of as great firmness and strength as ever belonged to the order which went before it, but which is now superseded and forgotten. It is well that nature hath annexed so potent a charm to actual possession; and a charm which strengthens with every year and day of its continuance. This may not efface the historical infamy of many ancient usurpations. But the world cannot be kept in a state of perpetual effervescence; and now that the many thousand wrongs of years gone by, as well as the dead on whom they have been inflicted, are fading into deep oblivion—it is well for the repose of its living generations, that, in virtue of the strong possessory feelings which nature causes to arise in the hearts of existing proprietors, and to be sympathised with by all other men, the possessors *de facto* have at length the homage done to them of possessors *de jure*; strong in their own consciousness of right, and strong in the recognition thereof by all their contemporaries.

18. But ere we have completed our views upon this subject, we must shortly dwell on a principle of very extensive application in morals; and which