

upholder of that conservative influence which binds together the rich and the poor in society; and thus it is that property is respected throughout all its gradations.

25. It is from the treatment of an original as if it were a derived affection, that the whole obscurity on this topic has arisen. It is quite as impossible to educe the possessory feeling from an anterior sense of justice, or from a respect for law—as it is to educe the parental feeling from a previous and comprehensive regard for the interests of humanity. There is no doubt that the general good is best promoted by the play of special family affections; but this is the work of nature, and not the work of man. And there is no doubt that the wealth and comfort of society are inconceivably augmented by those influences, which bind each individual nearly as much to his own property, as he is bound to his own offspring. But in the one case as well as the other, there were certain instinctive regards that came first, and the office of justice is altogether a subsequent one; not to put these regards into the breast of any, but to award the equal deference that is due to the regards of all—insomuch that the vast domain of one individual, perhaps transmitted to him from generation to generation, throughout the lengthened series of an ancestry, whose feet are now upon the earth, but whose top reaches the clouds, and is there lost in distant and obscure antiquity—is, to the last