

that,\* “Justice is not what constitutes property ; it is a virtue which presupposes property, and respects it however constituted.” And further, that —“justice as a moral virtue is not the creation of property, but the conformity of our actions to those views of property, which vary in the various states of society.” But it is not as he would affirm, it is not because obedience to a system of law, of which the evident tendency is to the public good, is the object of our moral regard—it is not this which moralizes, if we may be allowed such an application of the term, or rather, which constitutes the virtuousness of our respect to another man’s property. This is the common mistake of those moralists, who would ascribe every useful direction or habitude of man to some previous and comprehensive view taken by himself of what is best for the good of the individual or the good of society ; instead of regarding such habitude as the fruit of a special tendency, impressed direct by the hand of nature, on a previous and comprehensive view taken by its Author, and therefore bearing on it a palpable indication both of the goodness and the wisdom of nature’s God—even as hunger is the involuntary result of man’s physical constitution, and not of any care or consideration by man on the uses of food. The truth is—when deferring to another’s right of property, we do not think of the public good in the matter at

\* Lecture lxxxiii.