

all. But we are glad, in the first instance, each to possess and to use and to improve all that we are able to do without molestation, whether that freedom from molestation has been secured to us by law or by the mere circumstances of our state; and, in virtue of principles, not resulting from any anticipations of wisdom or any views of general philanthropy, (because developed in early childhood, and long before we are capable of being either philanthropists or legislators,) we feel a strong link of ownership with that which we have thus possessed and used, and on which we have bestowed our improvements; and we are aware that another man, in similar relation with another property, will feel towards it in like manner; and a sense of justice, or its still more significant and instructive name, of equity, suggests this equality between me and him—that, in the same manner as I would regard this encroachment on myself as injurious, so it were alike injurious in me to make a similar encroachment upon my neighbour.

27. We have expatiated thus long on the origin and rights of property—because of all subjects, it is the one, regarding which our writers on jurisprudence have sent forth the greatest amount of doubtful and unsatisfactory metaphysics. They labour and are in great perplexity to explain even the rise of the feeling or desire that is in the mind regarding it. They reason, as if the very conception of property was that which could not have