

are as often disappointed in the expectations that we form. This is the real account of that growing confidence, wherewith we anticipate the same results in the same apparent circumstances, the oftener that that result has in these circumstances been observed by us—as of a high-water about twice every day, or of a sunrise every morning. It is not that we need to be more assured than we are already of the constancy of Nature, in the sense that every result must always be the sure effect of its strict and causal antecedent. But we need to be assured of the real presence of this antecedent, in that mass of contemporaneous things under which the result has taken place hitherto; and of this we are more and more satisfied with every new occurrence of the same event in the same apparent circumstances. This too is our real object in the repetition of experiments. Not that we suspect that Nature will ever vacillate from her constancy—for if by one decisive experiment we should fix the real terms of any succession, this experiment were to us as good as a thousand. But each succession in nature is so liable to be obscured and complicated by other influences, that we must be quite sure, ere we can proclaim our discovery of some new sequence, that we have properly disentangled her separate trains from each other. For this purpose we have often to question Nature in many different ways; we have to combine and apply her elements variously; we have