

are aware that there is not a single disposition wherewith Nature hath endowed us which may not be perverted to evil; but when we see so much both of human kindness and of human enjoyment associated with that exhilaration of heart to which this emotion is so constantly giving rise—ministering with such copiousness, both to the smiles of the domestic hearth, and the gaieties of festive companionship—we cannot but regard it as the provision of an indulgent Father, who hath ordained it as a sweetener or an emollient amid the annoyances and the ills which flesh is heir to.

13. It were difficult to compute the whole effect of this ingredient, in alleviating the vexations of life; but certain it is, that the ludicrous is often blended with the annoyances which befall us; and that its operation, in lightening the pressure of what might have otherwise been viewed as somewhat in the light of calamity, is far from inconsiderable. This balancing of opposite emotions, suggested by different parts of the same complex event or object, and the effect of the one if a pleasant emotion, in assuaging the painfulness of the other, is not an uncommon phenomenon in the exhibitions of human feeling. A very obvious specimen of this is afforded by an acquaintance in the act of falling. There is no doubt an incongruity between the moment of his walking uprightly, and with the full anticipation of getting forward in that attitude to the object whither he is