

But the act of willing has been further expressed by a term appropriated wholly to itself—and that is, volition. Mr. Locke defines volition to be “an act of the mind, knowingly exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in, or withholding it from any particular action.” And Dr. Reid more briefly, but to the same effect, says that it is—“the determination of the mind to do or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power.” He very properly remarks, however, that, after all, determination is only another word for volition; and he excuses himself, at the same time, from giving any other more logical definition—on the plea, that simple acts of the mind do not admit of one.

5. There is certainly a ground, in the nature and actual workings of the mental constitution, for the distinction, which has been questioned of late, between will and desire. Desire has been thus defined by Locke—“It is the uneasiness man finds in himself, upon the absence of any thing, whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it,”—an uneasiness which many may remember to have felt in their younger days, at the sight of an apple of tempting physiognomy, that they would fain have lain hold of, but were restrained from touching by other considerations. The desire is just the liking that one has for the apple; and by its effectual solicitations, it may gain over the will to its side—in which case, through the medium of