

ledge of which we are obliged to receive at second hand, on the *testimony* of others; and which may have been observed through the distorted medium of ignorance or of prejudice—may even have been wilfully misrepresented—of these phenomena we have a still less assurance. If a phenomenon or event has happened only once, and be therefore historical; we are under the necessity of acquiescing in its truth, or of estimating its probability, according to the rules of evidence. If the phenomenon or event be of frequent occurrence, or if it be capable of being brought under our own observation; in order to remove our uncertainty, we endeavour to observe it ourselves; in short, we make an experiment. Such is the method we pursue, in obtaining all that knowledge which is the result of mere observation. The different events succeed one another, but we know not wherefore; we see not their mutual connexion. We believe that an event will, *probably*, follow another event; because the one event has always followed the other; or because of some other probability: but we cannot discover that *necessary* connexion between the two events, which so irresistibly leads us to determinate conclusions, where we can apply the laws of quantity.

The foregoing observations may be viewed as a continuation of those which were offered as preliminary to the first treatise in this volume;