

do by habit what they once have done by chance; and to perform of themselves what they have seen done by others. Of all the operations of the animal machine imitation is the most admirable. It is its most delicate and most extensive mobile, and exhibits the truest copy of thought, and though the cause of it in animals is altogether material, yet by its effects our wonder is excited. Men never more admire an ape than when they see it imitate the actions of men. In fact it is not easy to distinguish some copies from some originals. Besides, there are so few who can distinctly perceive the difference between a reality and a counterfeit, that to the bulk of mankind an ape must always excite astonishment.

Though apes have the art of imitating the actions of men, they are not a degree superior to other brutes, who all more or less possess the talent of imitation. In most animals this talent is confined to the imitation of their own species; but the ape, though he belongs not to the human species, copies many of our actions; and this he is enabled to do from his organization being somewhat similar. So nearly, indeed, do they sometimes carry the resemblance, that many have ignorantly ascribed that