

the fallacy, when led to it by a train of reasoning, each step of which we *think* we have examined and approved. Surely those who thus attach two senses to one word, or superadd a new meaning to an old one, act as absurdly as colonists who distribute themselves over the world, naming every place they come to by the names of those they have left, till all distinctions of geographical nomenclature are confounded, and till we are unable to decide whether an occurrence stated to have happened at Windsor took place in Europe, America, or Australia.*

(16.) It is, in fact, in this double or incomplete sense of words, that we must look for the origin of a very large portion of the errors into which we fall. Now, the study of the abstract sciences, such as arithmetic, geometry, algebra, &c., while they afford scope for the exercise of reasoning about objects that are, or, at least, may be conceived to be, external to us, yet, being free from these sources of error and mistake, accustom us to the strict use of language as an instrument of reason, and, by familiarizing us in our progress towards truth, to walk uprightly and straight-forward on firm ground, give us that proper and dignified carriage which could never be acquired by having always to pick our steps among obstructions and loose fragments, or to steady them in the reeling tempest of conflicting meanings.

(17.) But there is yet another point of view under which some acquaintance with abstract science may be regarded as highly desirable in general education, if not indispensably necessary, to impress on us the distinction between strict and vague reasoning, to show us what demonstration really *is*, and to give us thereby a full and intimate sense of the nature and strength of the evidence on which our knowledge of the actual system of nature, and the laws of natural phenomena, rests. For this purpose, however, a very moderate acquaintance with the

* It were much to be wished that navigators would be more cautious in laying themselves open to a similar censure. On looking hastily over a map of the world, we see three Melville Islands, two King George's Sounds, and Cape Blancos innumerable.