

selves: it is the absolute dismissal and clearing the mind of all prejudice, from whatever source arising, and the determination to stand and fall by the result of a direct appeal to facts in the first instance, and of strict logical deduction from them afterwards. Now, it is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of prejudices, which exercise very different dominion over the mind, and, moreover, differ extremely in the difficulty of dispossessing them, and the process to be gone through for that purpose. These are,—

1. Prejudices of opinion.

2. Prejudices of sense.

(69.) By prejudices of opinion, we mean opinions hastily taken up, either from the assertion of others, from our own superficial views, or from vulgar observation, and which, from being constantly admitted without dispute, have obtained the strong hold of habit on our minds. Such were the opinions once maintained that the earth is the greatest body in the universe, and placed immovable in its centre, and all the rest of the universe created for its sole use; that it is the nature of fire and of sounds to ascend; that the moonlight is cold; that dews *fall* from the air, &c.

(70.) To combat and destroy such prejudices we may proceed in two ways, either by demonstrating the falsehood of the facts alleged in their support, or by showing how the appearances, which seem to countenance them, are more satisfactorily accounted for without their admission. But it is unfortunately the nature of prejudices of opinion to adhere, in a certain degree, to every mind, and to some with pertinacious obstinacy, *pigris radicibus*, after all ground for their reasonable entertainment is destroyed. Against such a disposition the student of natural science must contend with all his power. Not that we are so unreasonable as to demand of him an instant and peremptory dismissal of all his former opinions and judgments; all we require is, that he will hold them without bigotry, retain till he shall see reason to question them, and be ready to resign them when fairly proved untenable, and to doubt them