

ocean, from whose beach we may have culled some of those innumerable beautiful productions it casts up with lavish prodigality, but whose acquisition can be regarded as no diminution of the treasures that remain.

(392.) But this consideration, so far from repressing our efforts, or rendering us hopeless of attaining any thing intrinsically great, ought rather to excite us to fresh enterprise, by the prospect of assured and ample recompense from that inexhaustible store which only awaits our continued endeavors. "It is no detraction from human capacity to suppose it incapable of infinite exertion, or of exhausting an infinite subject."\* In whatever state of knowledge we may conceive man to be placed, his progress towards a yet higher state need never fear a check, but must continue till the last existence of society.

(393.) It is in this respect an advantageous view of science, which refers all its advances to the discovery of general laws, and to the inclusion of what is already known in generalizations of still higher orders; inasmuch as this view of the subject represents it, as it really is, essentially incomplete, and incapable of being fully embodied in any system, or embraced by any single mind. Yet it must be recollected that, so far as our experience has hitherto gone, every advance towards generality has at the same time been a step towards simplification. It is only when we are wandering and lost in the mazes of particulars, or entangled in fruitless attempts to work our way downwards in the thorny paths of applications, to which our reasoning powers are incompetent, that nature appears complicated:—the moment we contemplate it as it is, and attain a position from which we can take a commanding view, though but of a small part of its plan, we never fail to recognise that sublime simplicity on which the mind rests satisfied that it has attained the truth.

\* Jackson, *The Four Ages*, p. 90.