

ages, have been dropping one after one from his hand, and sinking, fractured and broken, into the rocks below. I. is urged by Pope, that were "we to press on superior powers," and rise from our own assigned place to the place immediately above it, we would, in consequence of the transposition,

"In the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed.
From nature's chain whatever link we strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

The poet could scarce have anticipated that there was a science then sleeping in its cradle, and dreaming the dreams of Whiston, Leibnitz, and Burnet, which was one day to rise and demonstrate that both the tenth and the ten thousandth link in the chain had been already broken and laid by, with all the thousands of links between; and that man might laudably "press on superior powers," and attain to a "new nature," without in the least affecting the symmetry of creation by the void which his elevation would necessarily create; that, in fine, voids and blanks in the scale are exceedingly common things; and that, if men could, by rising into angels, make one blank more, they might do so with perfect impunity. Further, even were the graduated chain of Bolingbroke a reality, and not what Johnson well designates it, an "absurd hypothesis," and were what I have termed the interpolation of links necessary to its completion, the mere filling up of the original blanks and chasms would not necessarily involve the fact of degradation, seeing that each blank could be filled up, if I may so express myself, from its lower end. Each could be as certainly occupied to the full by an elevation of lower forms, as by a humiliation of the higher. We might receive the hypothesis of Bolingbroke, and yet