

philosopher dwells in his own bright and pleasant land of deductive reasoning, till he turns with disgust from all the speculations, necessarily less clear and conclusive, in which his imagination, his practical faculties, his moral sense, his capacity of religious hope and belief, are to be called into action, he becomes, more than common men, liable to miss the road to truths of extreme consequence.

This is so obvious, that charges are frequently brought against the study of mathematics, as unfitting men for those occupations which depend upon our common instinctive convictions and feelings, upon the unsystematic exercise of the understanding with regard to common relations and common occurrences. Bonaparte observed of Laplace, when he was placed in a public office of considerable importance, that he did not discharge it in so judicious and clear sighted a manner as his high intellectual fame might lead most persons to expect.\* “He sought,” that great judge of character said, “subtleties in every subject, and carried into his official employments the spirit of the method of infinitely small quantities,” by which the mathematician solves his more abstruse problems. And the complaint that mathematical studies make men insensible to moral evidence and to poetical beauties, is so often repeated as to show that some opposition of tendency is commonly perceived between that exercise of the intellect which mathematics requires and those processes which go on in our minds when moral character or imaginative beauty is the subject of our contemplation.

\* A l'intérieur le ministre Quinette fut remplacé par Laplace, géomètre du premier rang, mais qui ne tarda pas à se montrer administrateur plus que médiocre : des son premier travail les consuls s'aperçurent qu'ils s'étaient trompés : Laplace ne saisissait aucune question sous son vrai point de vue : il cherchait des subtilités partout, n'avait que des idées problématiques, et portait enfin l'esprit des infiniment petits dans l'administration. — *Mémoires écrits à Ste Hélène*, i. 3.