

ture, into which it is gradually transformed by the slow and successive expansion and development of all its parts. The subsequent processes of nutrition do nothing more than fill up the outlines already sketched on the living canvass. Every organ, nay every fibre, resulting from this development, contributes its share in the production of certain definite effects, which we constantly witness taking place around us, as well as experience in our own persons. But these effects, though so familiar to us, are not on that account the less involved in mystery, or the less replete with wonder. To say that they are the results of chance conveys no information; and is equivalent to the assertion that they are wholly without a cause. Every one who is accustomed to reflect upon the operations of his own mind, must feel that such a conclusion is contrary to the constitution of human thought; for if we are to reason at all, we can reason only upon the principle that for every effect there must exist a corresponding cause; or, in other words, that there is an established and invariable order of sequence among the changes which take place in the universe.

But though it be granted that all the phenomena we behold are the effects of certain causes, it might still be alleged, as a bar to all farther reasoning, that these causes are not only utterly unknown to us, but that their discovery is wholly beyond the reach of our faculties. The argument is specious only because it is true in one particular sense, and that a very limited one. Those who urge it, do not seem to be aware that its general application, in that very same sense, would shake the foundation of every kind of knowledge, even that which we regard as built upon the most solid basis. Of causation, it is agreed that we know nothing: all that we do know is, that one event succeeds another with undeviating constancy. Now, by probing this subject to the bottom, we shall find that, in rigid strictness, we have no certain knowledge of the existence of any thing, save that of the sensations and ideas which are actually passing in our minds, and of which we are necessarily con-