

shrewd natural philosopher who saw in the slow deposition of a few particles of earth or mud in still water, formed by the opposing action of two currents, a future sandbank, and, reasoning from cause to effect, was reminded, through the associative link thus furnished, of the brown wastes of the Goodwin Sands strewn with wrecks, and with the white surf beating over them, and the garrulous old woman to whom a print of Tenterden steeple suggested the contiguous sand-spit along whose margin she had been accustomed to pick up bits of broken planks for her fire, would be, on the showing of Dr Brown, under the influence of identical suggestions; for contiguous cause and contiguous steeple he has virtually placed in the same category. Is there any wonder that a busy age should leave philosophers who argued after such a fashion,—however nice their genius, or however excessive their ingenuity,—to milk their rams unheeded (we borrow the old illustration), and that only a few ill-employed students should be found idle enough to hold the pail? And yet, such is no extreme illustration of the idealistic philosophy.

It is, in truth, the grand objection to this philosophy, that it sets itself in direct opposition to mind engaged in all the practical walks. Let us adduce another instance. It is one of the fundamental principles of an ingenious metaphysician of the present time,—a principle in which he is virtually at one with Berkeley,—that being is to be regarded as tantamount to knowing; and that whatever is not an object of consciousness cannot be regarded as existent. Berkeley held that the absolute existence of unthinking beings, without any relation to their being perceived, was wholly unintelligible; and we at once grant that a bar of metal kept in the fire until it glows a bright red has no consciousness of redness,—that the caloric with which it is charged has no sense of heat,—and further, that the bar itself has no feeling whatever