gives ſtability to every art. The works, whether of poets, painters, moraliſts, or historians, which are built upon gene­ral nature, live for ever ; while thoſe which depend for their existence on particular cuſtoms and habits, a particular view of nature, or the fluctuation of faſhion, can only be coeval with that which firſt raised them from obſcurity. All the individual objects which are exhibited to our view by na­ture, upon cloſe examination, will be found to have their bleniſhes and defects, The moſt beautiful forms have something about them like weakneſs, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives theſe blemiſhes : It muſt be an eye long uſed to the contemplation and comparison of theſe forms ; which alone can diſcern what any ſet of objects of the ſame kind has in common, and what each wants in particular.”

From theſe reaſonings the same great artiſt concludes, that the man who is ambitious of the character of posſeſſing a correct taſte, ought to acquire a "habit of comparing and digeſting his notions. He ought not to be wholly unac­quainted with that part of philosophy which gives him an inſight into human nature, and relates to the manners, cha­racters, paſſions, and affections. He ought to know some*thing* concerning the m*ind,* as well as a great deal concern­ing the *body,* and the various external works of nature and of art ; for it is only the power of diſtinguiſhing right ſrom wrong that is properly denominated *taste.*

“ Genius and taste, in their common acceptation, appear to be very nearly related ; the difference lies only in this, that genius has superadded to it a habit or power of execu­tion. Or we may say, that taſte, when this power is added, changes its name, and is called *genius.* They both, in the popular opinion, pretend to an entire exemption from the reſtraint of rules. It is ſuppoſed that their powers are in­tuitive ; that under the name of genius great works are pro­duced, and under the name of *taste an* exact judgment is given, without our knowing why, and without being under the leaſt obligation to reaſon, precept, or experience.

One can ſcarce ſtate theſe opinions without expoſing their abſurdity ; yet they are conſtantly in the mouths of men, and particularly of illiterate and affected connoiſſeurs. The natural appetite, or taſte of the human mind, is for *truth ;* whether that truth reſults from the real agreement or equality of original ideas among themſelves, from the agree­ment of the repreſentation of any object with the thing represented, or from the correſpondence of the ſeveral parts of any arrangement with each other. It is the very same taſte which reliſhes a demonstration in geometry, that is pleaſed with the reſemblance of a picture to an original, and touched with the harmony of music.

“ But beſides *real,* there is alſo *apparent* truth, or opinion, or prejudice. With regard to real truth, when it is known, the taſte which conforms to it is and muſt be uni­form. With regard to the ſecond sort of truth, which may be called *truth upon sufferance,* or *truth by courtesy,* it is not fixed but variable. However, whilſt theſe opinions and prejudices on which it is founded continue, they operate as truth ; and the art, whoſe office it is to pleaſe the mind as well as inſtruct it, muſt direct itſelf according to *opinion,* or it will not attain its end. In proportion as theſe prejudices are known to be generally diffuſed or long received, the taste which conforms to them approaches nearer to certain­ty, and to a sort of reſemblance to real ſcience, even where opinions are found to be no better than prejudices. And since they deserve, on account of their duration and extent, to be conſidered as really true, they become capable of no ſmall degree of ſtability and determination by their permanent and uniform nature.

“ Of the judgment which we make on the works of art, and the preference that we give to one class of art over an­other, if a reaſon be demanded, the queſtion is perhaps eva­ded by anſwering, I judge from my taſte ; but it does not follow that a better answer cannot be given, though for common gazers this may be ſufficient. Every man is not obliged to inveſtigate the cauſes of his approbation or dislike. The arts would lie open for ever to caprice and caſualty, if thoſe who are to judge of their excellencies had no settled principles by which they are to regulate their decisions, and the merit or defect of performances were to be determined by unguided fancy. And indeed we may ven­ture to assert, that whatever ſpeculative knowledge is neceſſary to the artiſt, is equally and indiſpenſably necessary to the critic and the connoiſſeur.

“ The firſt idea that occurs in the consideration of what is fixed in art or in taſte, is that presiding principle which we have already mentioned, the general idea of nature. The beginning, the middle, and the end of every thing that is valuable in taſte, is compriſed in the knowledge of what is truly nature ; for whatever ideas are not conformable to thoſe of nature or universal opinion, muſt be conſidered as more or less capricious ; the idea of nature comprehending not only the forms which nature produces, but alſo the na­ture find internal fabric and organization, as I may call itm of the human mind and imagination. General ideas, beauty, or nature, are but different ways of expressing the same thing, whether we apply theſe terms to statues, poetry, or picture. Deformity is not nature, but an accidental devia­tion from her accuſtomed practice. This general idea there­fore ought to be called *nature;* and nothing else, correctly speaking, has a right to that name. Hence it plainly ap­pears, that as a work is conducted under the influence of general ideas, or partial, it is principnlly to be conſidered as the effect of a good or a bad taſte.”

Upon the whole, we may conclude that the real ſubſtance, as it may be called, of what goes under the name *of taste,* is fixed and eſtabliſhed in the nature of things ; that there are certain and regular cauſes by which the imagination and paſſions of men are affected ; and that the knowledge of theſe cauſes is acquired by a laborious and diligent inveſtigation of nature, and by the same slow progress as wisdom or knowledge of every kind, however instantaueous its ope­rations may appear when thus acquired. A man of real taſte is always a man of judgment in other reſpects ; and those inventions which either diſdain or shrink from reaſon, are generally more like the dreams of a diſtempered brain than the exalted enthusiasm or a sound and true genius. In the midſt of the higheſt flights of fancy or imagination, reason ought to preſide from firſt to laſt; and he who ſhall de­cide on the beauties of any one of the fine arts by an ima­ginary innate ſenſe or feeling, will make as ridiculous an appearance as the connoisſeur mentioned by Dr Moor, who praiſed as a work of the divine Raphael the wretched daub­ing by a Swiſs copyiſt. The reader who wiſhes for further inſtruction in the philosophy of taſte, may conſult Gerard’s Essay on Taſte, with the dissertations of Voltaire, d’Alem­bert, and Monteſquieu ; Dr Blair’s Lectures on the Belles Lettres ; Dr Reid’s Eſſays on the Intellectual Powers of Man ; Aliſon’s Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taſte; and Sir Joſhua Reynold’s Diſcourſes delivered in the Royal Academy.

TATE (Nahum), an Engliſh poet, born about the middle of the reign of Charles II. in Ireland, where he re­ceived his education. He was made poet-laureat to King William upon the death of Shadwell, and held that place until the reign of George I. whoſe firſt birthday ode he