tone beneath the tonic. *Si,* or B, is the ſenſible note in the tone of *ut* or C *ſol* ; or G ſharp, in the tone of *la* or A.

They call it the *sensible note* on this account, that it cauſes to be perceived the tone or natural ſeries of the key and the tonic itſelf ; upon which, after the chord of the do­minant, the ſenſible note taking the shorteſt road, is under a neceſſity of riſing ; which has made ſome au­thors treat this ſenſible note as a major diſſonance, for want of obſerving, that diſſonance, being a relation, cannot be conſtituted unleſs by two notes between which it ſubſiſts.

It is not meant that the ſenſible note is the ſeventh of the tone, becauſe, in the minor mode, this ſeventh can­not be a ſenſible note but in aſcending ; for, in descending, it is at the diſtance of a full note from the tonic, and of a third minor from the dominant.

SENSIBILITY, is a nice and delicate perception of pleaſure or pain, beauty or deformity. It is very near­ly allied to taſte ; and, as far as it is natural, ſeems to depend upon the organization of the nervous ſyſtem. It is capable, however, of cultivation, and is experien­ced in a much higher degree in civilized than in ſavage nations, and among persons liberally educated than among boors and illiterate mechanics. The man who has cultivated any of the fine arts has a much quicker and more exquiſite perception of beauty and deformity in the execution of that art, than another of equal or even greater natural powers, who has but caſually inſpected its productions. He who has been long accuſtomed to that decorum of manners which characterizes the polite part of the world, perceives almoſt inſtantaneouſly the ſmalleſt deviation from it, and feels himſelf al­moſt as much hurt by behaviour harmleſs in itſelf, as by the groſſeſt rudeneſs ; and the man who has long pro­ceeded ſteadily in the paths of virtue, and often painted to himſelf the deformity of vice, and the miſeries of which it is productive, is more quickly alarmed at any deviation from rectitude, than another who, though his life has been ſtained by no crime, has yet thought leſs upon the principles of virtue and conſequences of vice.

Every thing which can be called ſenſibility, and is not born with man, may be reſolved into association, and is to be regulated accordingly ; for ſenſibilities may be acquired which are inimical to happineſs and to the practice of virtue. The man is not to be envied who has ſo accuſtomed himſelf to the forms of polite addreſs as to be hurt by the unaffected language and manners of the honeſt peaſant, with whom he may have occasion to tranſact buſineſs ; nor is he likely to acquire much uſeful knowledge who has ſo ſedulouſly ſtudied the beauties of composition as to be unable to read without diſguſt a book of ſcience or of hiſtory, of which the ſtyle comes not up to his ſtandard of perfection. That ſensibility which we either have from nature, or neceſſarily acquire, of the miſeries of others, is of the greateſt uſe when properly regulated, as it powerfully impels us to relieve their diſtreſs ; but if it by any means become ſo exquiſite as to make us ſhun the sight of miſery, it counteracts the end for which it was implanted in our nature, and only deprives us of happineſs, while it con­tributes nothing to the good of others. Indeed there is reaſon to believe that all ſuch extreme ſenſibilities are ſelfiſh affectations, employed as apologies for withholding From the miſerable that relief which it is in our power

to give ; for there is not a fact better eſtabliſhed in the ſcience of human nature, than that paſſive perceptions grow gradually weaker by repetition, while active ha­bits daily acquire ſtrength.

It is of great importance to a literary man to culti­vate his taſte, becauſe it is the ſource of much elegant and refined pleaſure, (see Taste) ; but there is a de­gree of faſtidiouſneſs which renders that pleaſure impoſſible to be obtained, and is the certain indication of ex­piring letters. It is neccſſary to ſubmit to the artificial rules of politeneſs, for they tend to promote the peace and harmony of ſociety, and are ſometimes a uſeful ſubſtitute for moral virtue ; but he who with respect to them has ſo much ſenſibility as to be diſguſted with all whole manners are not equally poliſhed with his own, is a very troubleſome member of ſociety. It is every man’s duty to cultivate his moral ſenſibilities, ſo as to make them ſubſervient to the purpoſes for which they were given to him ; but if he either feel, or pretend to feel, the miſeries of others to ſo exquiſite a degree as to be unable to afford them the relief which they have a right to expect, his ſenſibilities are of no good tendency.

That the man of true ſenſibility has more pains and more pleaſures than the callous wretch, is univerſally ad­mitted, as well as that his enjoyments and ſufferings are more exquiſite in their kinds ; and as no man lives for himſelf alone, no man will acknowledge his want of ſenſibility, or expreſs a wiſh that his heart were callous. It is, however, a matter of ſome moment to diſtinguish real ſenſibilities from ridiculous affections ; thoſe which tend to increase the ſum of human happineſs from ſuch as have a contrary tendency, and to cultivate them all in ſuch a manner as to make them anſwer the ends for which they were implanted in us by the beneficent Author of na­ture. This can be done only by watching over them as over other aſſociations, (ſee Metaphysics, n⁰ 98.); for exceſſive ſenſibility, as it is not the gift of nature, is the bane of human happineſs. “ Too much tenderneſs (as Rouſſeau well obſerves) proves the bitterest curſe inſtead of the moſt fruitful bleſſing ; vexation and disappointment are its certain conſequences. The tempe­rature of the air, the change of the ſeaſons, the brilli­ancy of the ſun, or thickneſs of the fogs, are ſo many moving ſprings to the unhappy poſſeſſor, and he becomes the wanton ſport of their arbitration.”

SENSITIVE-plant. See MIMOSA, Dionæa, and Hedysarum.

The ſenſitive plants are well known to poſſeſs a kind of motion, by which the leaves and ſtalks are contract­ed and fall down upon being ſlightly touched, or ſhaken with ſome degree of violence.

The contraction of the leaves and branches of the ſenſitive plant when touched, is a very ſingular phenome­non. Different hypotheſes have been formed by botaniſts in order to explain it ; but we are diſpoſed to be­lieve that theſe have generally been deduced rather from analogical reaſoning than from a collection of facts and obſervations. We ſhall therefore give an account of all the important facts which we have been able to collect upon this curious ſubject ; and then draw ſuch conclu­sions as obviouſly reſult from them, without, however, at­tempting to ſupport any old, or to eſtabliſh a new, hypotheſis.

1. It is difficult to touch the leaf of a healthy ſenſi­tive plant ſo delicately that it will not immediately col-