sensations is not uniform in degree, but varies considerably, not only in different individuals, but even in the same per­sons at different times. It is not thus with the sensations themselves. These are always constant and uniform. The same kind of impression, when the organs are sound, uni­formly and invariably produces similar sensations ; and these are as invariably followed by the perception of their own peculiar exciting causes. For any particular impression is never known to excite in the same person a new sensation, or the perceptions of an external object different from that which it previously suggested, excepting in cases of disease. And when it does rarely occur, as in those who cannot dis­tinguish a particular colour, smell, or taste, from certain others, we uniformly attribute it to disease or malconforma­tion. Were we not thus to have uniformly similar sensa­tions and perceptions of external objects from similar im­pressions, the senses would not be at all subservient to our intellectual improvement, since, by giving different lessons concerning the same or similar objects at different times, they would render it impossible for us to be certain of any thing, or to benefit by experience.

The effects of custom, which are at all times so consider­able and evident with respect both to the mind and the body, as in the case of particular organs or faculties much im­proved by attention and exercise, have little or no influence at all in interrupting or modifying this uniformity in our sensations and perceptions. For no sound or properly or­ganized person will, either naturally or by custom, ever mis­take hardness for softness, or red for green, or sweet for bit­ter. But the influence of custom in modifying the pains and pleasures of sense is well known and considerable. For a person who can most accurately distinguish sweetness from sourness, will, at the same time, either by particular conformation, or more frequently in consequence of use and habit, prefer wormwood or tobacco to honey.

But although we may despair of ever being able to dis­cover the physical cause of the pleasures and pains of the senses, we may, however, advance a little by observing and registering particular facts. It is accordingly of use to re­mark, that every species of sensation, if its nature be other­wise unchanged, is agreeable or disagreeable in proportion to its strength or intenseness. For there is no sensation, however agreeable, that will not become disagreeable, and even intolerable, if it be immoderately intense. And, on the contrary, those which by their strength and nature are very troublesome, if rendered more mild and moderate, be­come not only tolerable, but agreeable. Thus, with respect to the senses, it would seem that pain and pleasure are only different degrees of the same feeling ; and when we consider the great varieties of which the sensation, not only of differ­ent organs, but even of any one of them, is susceptible, and that each degree of these may be accompanied with pleasure or pain, more or less, we must conclude that the pains and pleasures of sense are capable of numberless mo­difications both in degree and in kind.

We frequently observe, that sensations which were at first agreeable, if often repeated, lose their relish, though the nature and strength of the impressions be the same ; whilst others, from being at first very disagreeable, as the taste of tobacco and opium, become very pleasing, though the na­ture and strength of the impressions have suffered no change. For the explanation of such facts as these we must have re­course to the effects of custom. Thus, in both these oppo­site cases, the sensations, from being often repeated, lose part of the strength and of the novelty of their first im­pressions ; and, with respect to the former instance, being unable to command the attention, they become in the course of time almost wholly, or altogether neglected, whilst in the latter case, from being very offensive, they become highly agreeable. But if it be asked why habit and cus­tom produce these effects, and in what manner, we are un­

able to explain it farther, than by saying, since the fact is unquestionable, that such is the nature of the human con­stitution. Of the effects themselves, no man can entertain a doubt ; and their causes, though at present unknown, may by time and inquiry be further developed and simplified.

“ The labyrinth,” says Dr Reid, “ may be too intricate, and the thread too fine, to be traced through all its windings ; but if we stop where we can trace it no farther, and secure the ground we have gained, there is no harm done ; a quicker eye may in time trace it farther.”

These principles are capable of affording us still farther explanations. Why are new sensations always more agree­able, and variety so pleasing ? Because they fix the atten­tion more, and are not as yet blunted by frequent repetition or by habit. It is because some sensations lose their wont­ed effect by custom and by repetition, that we require stronger ones, or at least stronger impressions on the or­gans and nerves, to increase or continue our pleasures. It is also in consequence of their becoming less poignant through habit that we may neglect so many pleasures, which we hard­ly know to be such, till they have flown for ever ; and it is because in the morning of life every thing has more novelty, and because habit has not destroyed their relish, that the pleasures of youth are much more intense than those of age. The degree of pleasure is similar to that which a blind man would feel on being made to see, or to that which a man would enjoy on suddenly acquiring a new sensitive faculty, although by long use and habit these pleasures are at pre­sent for the most part or wholly blotted away.

Although most sensations, when strong and lively enough to make themselves accurately and easily distinguished, ge­nerally please most, each in its own kind and manner; still, as there are different kinds of pleasure, different sensations may please the mind in various ways ; and accordingly, it is not from the lustre of the midday sun, nor from the beau­tiful and lively appearance of all nature at noon, solely, that the eyes can derive pleasure, any more than grand musical sounds are the only things that please the ear. For we often contemplate with a very different and a very consi­derable degree of pleasure the sublime and awful scenes of nature, the twilight darkness of the shady grove, and even the gloomy horror of night itself. We listen with delight. to the tempest shaking the forest, as well as to the gentle murmurs of the passing stream. There is even a time when nothing gives so much pleasure as darkness, silence, and the absence of all sensation.

Amidst the great variety of good and evil with which we are everywhere surrounded, it is a matter of the highest importance to be able to discern aright. This we should be incapable of doing were we not endowed with agreeable as well as painful sensations. These serve to direct our choice. Whatever contributes in any degree to our pre­servation, and to the improvement of our organs and facul­ties, is accompanied with pleasure ; and, on the contrary, when we are threatened with danger, a painful sensation gives us the alarm. It is to the establishment of this law that we are indebted for the duration of our lives, the im­proved and vigorous state of our faculties, and the enjoy­ment of that small portion of happiness allotted to us by na­ture. “ God,” says a French writer, “ having endowed man with various faculties, bodily as well as intellectual, in order to promote his happiness, also vouchsafes to conduct him to this noble end, not only by the deductions of reason, but also by the force of instinct and sensation, which are more powerful and efficacious principles. Thus nature, by a sen­sation of pain, instantaneously apprises us of what might prove hurtful to us ; and, on the contrary, by an agreeable sensation, gently leads us to whatever may tend to the pre­servation of our existence, and to the perfect state of our faculties, these being the two points on which our happi­ness depends. Our faculties can neither be of use, nor dis-