play themselves, farther than as we exercise them. Motion or action is therefore so necessary to us, that without it we must inevitably sink into a deplorable state of insensibility and languor. On the other hand, as we arc weak and li­mited creatures, all excessive and violent action would im­pair and destroy our organs ; we must therefore use only moderate motion or exercise, since by these means the use or perfection of our faculties is reconciled with our chief interest, which is self-preservation. Now it is to this happy medium, we mean to a moderate exercise of our faculties, that the Author of our nature has so wisely annexed plea­sure.

The pleasures of sense are thus confined within narrow limits ; for they cannot be much increased without pain, or often repeated without losing their relish, at least in a great measure ; nor can they be long continued, partly for the same reason, and because they exhaust the mind, or rather the nervous system. Hence we see that our animal appe­tites are confined within a narrow range, as is evident from the effects of excess in eating and drinking. All our sen­sitive powers are impaired ; whilst, on the contrary, our in­tellectual powers are strengthened and improved by use and exercise. And in proportion as we indulge our sensi­tive powers, our desires of indulgence increase, whilst the pleasures which are the objects of these desires become regularly less poignant. These, indeed, are wise regula­tions of nature ; for it would seem as if she intended to whisper gently to us in this way, by means of practical ex­perience, that we are not born solely for the enjoyment of pleasure, at least not for that of the pleasures of the senses ; for all of them, as we have already remarked, if much in­dulged, lead to listlessness and disgust, and sometimes to considerable pain. And indeed, just as pleasure passes thus readily into trouble and pain, so does the sudden cessation of pain, at least when this has been considerable, produce often extraordinary pleasure ; so that we may here apply the beautiful allegory of Socrates, “ that although pleasure and pain arc contrary in their nature, and have their faces turned different ways, yet that Jupiter has tied them so to­gether, that he who lays hold of the one draws the other along with it.”

We have just said, that the sudden cessation of pain, at least when this has been considerable, produces often ex­traordinary pleasure. But this opinion seems to be denied by the author of an inquiry concerning taste. “ Among the pleasures of sense,” says Mr Knight, “ more particularly among those belonging to touch, there is a certain class, which, though arising from negative causes, are neverthe­less real and positive pleasures ; as when we gradually sink from any violent or excessive degree of action or irritation into a state of tranquillity and repose. I say gradually, for if the transition be sudden and abrupt, it will not be pleasant ; the pleasure arising from the inverted action of the nerves, and not from the utter cessation of action. From this in­verted action arises the gratification which we receive from a cool breeze when the body has been excessively heated ; or from the rocking of a cradle, or the gentle motion of a boat, or easy carriage, after having been fatigued with violent ex­ercise. Such, too, is that which twilight, or the gloomy shade of a thicket, affords to the eye after it has been dazzled by the blaze of the mid-day sun ; and such, likewise, is that which the ear receives from the gradual diminution of loud­ness of tone in music.” That pleasure follows a gradual cessation of any violent action or irritation, we mean not to deny ; but we are at a loss to comprehend how it follows

that the transition from strong pain, if it be sudden and abrupt, will not be pleasant.

But although the pleasures of sense be thus limited, these limits are very different with respect to the different senses. Some of them are soon exhausted, and do not any longer distinguish well the objects that correspond to them ; nor are they pleased with those objects which were at first very agreeable, and which they distinguish with sufficient accu­racy ; whilst others continue to perform their functions longer, and to enjoy a more continued pleasure. Thus the senses of smell and of taste are almost immediately satiat­ed, the sense of hearing more slowly ; but the sight is in this respect the last of all to be fatigued or satiated ; whilst the pleasures that arise from the exercise of our mental fa­culties are by far the most durable of all. “ Exercise of the mind is as necessary as that of the body to preserve our existence. The senses of other animals, being more quick than ours, are sufficient to direct them to follow what is agreeable to their nature, or to shun whatever is contrary thereto. But we are endowed with reason in order to sup­ply the deficiency of our senses ; and pleasure presents herself as an incitement to exercise, in order to keep the mind from a state of hurtful inactivity. Pleasure is not only the parent of sports and amusements, but also of arts and sciences; and as the whole universe is, as it were, forced by our industry to pay tribute to our wants and de­sires, we cannot but acknowledge our obligation to that law of nature which has annexed a degree of pleasure to what­ever exercises without fatiguing the mind. The pleasure accompanying it is sometimes so great that it transports the very soul, so that she seems as it were disengaged from the body. We know what is recorded in history concern­ing Archimedes,@@1 and several other geometricians, both an­cient and modem. If we doubt the truth of such facts, we must at least acknowledge their probability, since we meet every day with a number of similar examples. When we see a chess-player so deeply immersed in thought as to be in a manner lost to his outward senses, should we not ima­gine him to be wholly engrossed with the care of his own private affairs, or of the public weal ? But the object of all this profound meditation is the pleasure of exercising the mind by the movement of a piece of ivory. From this ex­ercise of the mind also arises the pleasure we sometimes take in refined and delicate sentiments, which, after the manner of Virgil’s shepherdess *(Et fugit ad salices, sed se cupit ante videri),* are sometimes artfully concealed, but so as to afford us the pleasure of discovering them.”@@8

From some of the foregoing remarks we likewise see that nature points out to us the superiority and excellence of our mental faculties, thus suggesting to us that we ought to cultivate them most, as being our better and nobler part, to the cultivation of which that of our sensitive faculties should be merely subservient. But although our plea­sures are thus by nature rendered in a great degree inde­pendent of ourselves, still we have it in our power to make them all more durable, by varying and mixing them with one another, or by interposing between those that are very agreeable others that are less pleasing, so as that no indi­vidual pleasure shall be in excess.

Besides the circumstances already noticed, there are others of a very different kind, which have also consider­able influence on the pleasures of the senses ; such as dif­ferent conditions of the whole body, particularly of the nerves, or of certain organs or functions, to which func­tions some organs of sense, and perhaps even the sensation

@@@, When Syracuse was taken by the Romane under Marcellus, Archimedes was in bis study, so intent upon some geometrical problems, that he neither heard the clamour of the Romans, nor perceived that the city was taken. In this transport of study and contemplation, a soldier came on him with his drawn sword ; Archimedes, on seeing him, besought him to hold his hand till he had finished the problem he was about. But the soldier, deaf to his entreaty, ran him through the body, although Marcellus, upon entering the city, had given orders that Archimedes should be spared.

***@@@, Théorie det Sentiments Agréable..***