Every thing which can be called sensibility, and is not bom 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 ad­ditional 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 ; 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 necessary 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 whose 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 affectations, 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) ; 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 Ρlαντ. The sensitive plants are well known to possess a kind of motion, by which the leaves and stalks are contracted, and fall down on being slightly touch­ed, or shaken with some degree of violence.

The contraction of the leaves and branches of the sen­

sitive plant when touched is a very singular phenomena, and 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.

First, it is difficult to touch the leaf of a healthy sensi­tive plant so delicately that it will not immediately collapse, the foliola or little leaves moving at their base till they come into contact, and then applying themselves close to­gether. If the leaf be touched with a little more force, the opposite leaf will exhibit the same appearance. If a little more force be applied, the partial footstalks bend down to­wards the common footstalk from which they issue, making with it a more acute angle than before. If the touch be more violent still, all the leaves situated on the same side with the one that has been touched will instantly collapse, and the partial footstalk will approach the common footstalk to which it is attached, in the same manner as the partial footstalk of the leaf approaches the stem or branch from which it issues ; so that the whole plant, from having its branches extended, will immediately appear like a weeping birch.

Secondly, these motions of the plant are performed by means of three distinct and sensible articulations ; the first that of the foliola or lobes to the partial footstalk, the second that of the partial footstalk to the common one, and the third that of the common footstalk to the trunk ; the primary motion of all which is, the closing of the leaf upon the partial footstalk, which is performed in a similar man­ner, and by a similar articulation. This, however, is much less visible than the others. These motions are wholly in­dependent of one another, as may be proved by experi­ment. It appears, that if the partial footstalks are moved, and collapse toward the petioli, or these toward the trunk, the little leaves, whose motion is usually primary to these, should be affected also ; yet experiment proves that it is possible to touch the footstalks in such a manner as to af­fect them only, and make them apply themselves to the trunk, while the leaves feel nothing of the touch. But this cannot be, unless the footstalks are so disposed as that they can fall to the trunk, without suffering their leaves to touch any part of the plant in their passage, because, if they do, they are immediately affected.

Thirdly, winds and heavy rains make the leaves of the sensitive plant contract and close; but no such effect is pro­duced from slight showers.

Fourthly, at night, or when exposed to much cold in the day, the leaves meet and close in the same manner as when touched, folding their upper surfaces together, and in part over each other, like scales or tiles, so as to expose as little as possible of the upper surface to the air. The opposite sides of the leaves, or foliola, do not come close together in the night, for when touched they apply themselves closer together. Dr Darwin kept a sensitive plant in a dark place for some hours after daybreak ; the leaves and footstalks were collapsed as in its most profound sleep, and on ex­posing it to the light, above twenty minutes passed before it was expanded.

Fifthly, in the month of August, a sensitive plant was carried in a pot out of its usual place into a dark cave ; the motion that it received in the carriage shut up its leaves, and they did not open till twenty-four hours afterwards : at this time they became moderately open, but were after­wards subject to no changes at night or morning, but re­mained three days and nights with their leaves in the same moderately open state. At the end of this time they were