

down the fire from heaven which at once gives them movement and animation.

II. In the comments I think it right to make on the second branch of our studies, I may take for granted that every one of those whom I now address, has from his tender years been taught the languages of Greece and Rome, and is familiar with at least a portion of their literature. It is no part of my object either to praise or blame the system of early education in this country: but, before I pass on, I may recall to your minds the wonderful ease with which a child comprehends the conventional signs of thought formed between man and man—not only learns the meaning of words descriptive of visible things; but understands, by a kind of rational instinct, the meaning of abstract terms, without ever thinking of the faculty by which he comes to separate them from the names of mere objects of sense. The readiness with which a child acquires a language may well be called a rational instinct: for during the time that his knowledge is built up, and that he learns to handle the implements of thought, he knows no more of what passes within himself, than he does of the structure of the eye, or of the properties of light, while he attends to the impressions on his visual sense, and gives to each impression its appropriate name. As the memory becomes stored with words, and the mind accustomed to their application, this readiness of verbal acquisition gradually decays, and at length, with some persons, almost disappears. That this is true, I need only appeal to the experience of those who, after being long disused to such studies, have attempted to learn a language. They will tell you