

act of reading, the ultimate object is to obtain possession of the author's sentiments or meaning; and all memory of the words, still more of the component letters, though each of them must have been present to the mind, pass irrecoverably away from it. In like manner, the anterior steps of many a mental process may actually be described, yet without consciousness—the attention resting, not on the fugitive means, but on the important end in which they terminate. It is thus that we seem to judge, on the instant, of distances, as if under a guidance that was immediate and instinctive, and not by the result of a derivative process—because insensible to the rapid train of inference which led to it. The mind is too much occupied with the information itself, for looking back on the light and shadowy footsteps of the messenger who brought it, which it would find difficult if not impossible to trace—and besides, having no practical call upon it for making such a retrospect. It is thus that, when looking intently on some beautiful object in Nature, we are so much occupied with the resulting enjoyment, as to overlook the intermediate train of unbidden associations, which connects the sight of that which is before us, with the resulting and exquisite pleasure, that we feel in the act of beholding it. The principle has been much resorted to, in expounding that process, by which the education of the senses is carried forward; and, more especially, the way in which the intimations of sight and touch are made to correct and to modify each other. It has also been employed with good effect, in the attempt to establish a philosophy of taste. But these