

utter ignorance of the nature of those actions; and all our knowledge on this subject is limited to the changes which we are conscious are going on in the mind. It is to these mental changes, therefore, that our attention is now to be directed.

In experiencing mere sensations, whatever be their assemblage or order of succession, the mind is wholly passive: on the other hand, the mind is active on all occasions when we combine into one idea sensations of different kinds, (such as those which are derived from each separate sense,) when we compare sensations or ideas with one another, when we analyze a compound idea, and unite its elements in an order or mode of combination different from that in which they were originally presented. Many of these active operations of mind are implied in the process of perception; for although it might be supposed that the diversity in the nature of our sensations would sufficiently indicate to us a corresponding variety in the qualities of the material agents, which produce their impressions on our senses, yet these very qualities, nay, even the existence of the objects themselves, are merely inferences deduced by our reasoning powers, and not the immediate effects of those impressions on the mind. We talk, for instance, of seeing a distant body; yet the immediate object of our perception can only be the light, which has produced that particular impression on our retina; whence we infer, by a mental process, the existence, the position, and the magnitude of that body. When we hear a distant sound, the immediate object of our perception is neither the sounding body whence it emanates, nor the successive undulations of the medium conveying the effect to our ear; but it is the peculiar impression made by the vibrating particles of the fluid, which are in direct contact with the auditory nerve. It is not difficult to prove that the objects of perception are mere creations of the mind, suggested, probably instinctively, by the accompanying sensations, but having no real resemblance or correspondence either with the impressions themselves, or with the agencies