

most frequent and familiar operations of human life. In the act of reading, every alphabetical letter must have been present to the mind—yet how many thousands of them, in the course of a single hour, must have past in fleeting succession, without so much as one moment's sense of their presence, which the mind has any recollection of. And it is the same in listening to an acquaintance, when we receive the whole meaning and effect of his discourse, without the distinct consciousness of very many of those individual words which still were indispensable to the meaning. Nay, there are other and yet more inscrutable mysteries in the human constitution; and which relate, not to the thoughts that we conceive without being sensible of them, but even to the volitions that we put forth, and to very many of which we are alike insensible. We have only to reflect on the number and complexity of those muscles which are put into action, in the mere processes of writing or walking, or even of so balancing ourselves as to maintain a posture of stability. It is understood to be at the bidding of the will, that each of our muscles performs its distinct office; and yet, out of the countless volitions, which had their part and their play, in these complicated, and yet withal most familiar and easily practicable operations—how many there are which wholly escape the eye of consciousness. And thus too, recourse may be had to the imagination of certain associating processes, too hidden for being the objects of sense at the time, and too fugitive for being the objects of remembrance afterwards. And on the strength of these it may be asked—