

scene; and I have thought and spoken with all the assuming confidence of folly. But perhaps woman was designed by heaven to fool us into happiness: and for this purpose, what female could be more calculated than *Simplicia*? the inartificial graces of whose person, the pathos of whose features, the openness of whose countenance, and the intelligence of whose brow, impress the mind of the beholder; while the luxuriance of her snowy bosom, and the glossy fulness of her ruby lips, awaken all the warmer emotions of the heart. Yet *Simplicia* is far from what is generally called of the first order of fine forms. She is short, and has rather the appearance of florid health, than of that sickly delicacy, which town-taught dissipation naturally produces, and

which, therefore, town-bred vanity affects to admire; and her complexion, tho' regular, is not a little inclined to the brunette. But, as her proportions are excellent, her features (enclosed in a pleasing outline of a smooth and shortish oval) are soft, regular, and truly feminine; as her countenance is harmonized and serene, yet capable of much expression; as her eyes, though not peculiarly bright, are tender and attractive, and fringed by dark and beautiful lashes, as, above all, she has an evident tenderness of soul, and every symbol of an excellent temper, I must pronounce her one of those for whom the heart of man need not be ashamed to throb with a warmer and more tender sensation than has agitated mine.

SPECULATIONS ON THE PERCEPTIVE POWER OF VEGETABLES.

[By Dr. Percival. Read before the Philosophical Society.]

IN all our enquiries into truth, whether natural or moral, it is necessary to take into previous consideration, the kind of evidence which the subject admits of; and the degree of it, which is sufficient to afford satisfaction to the mind. Demonstrative evidence is absolute, and without gradation; but probable evidence ascends, by regular steps, from the lowest presumption, to the highest moral certainty. A single presumption, is, indeed, of little weight; but a series of such imperfect proofs may produce the fullest conviction. The strength of belief, however, may often be greater, than is proportionate to the force and number of these proofs, either individually or collectively considered. For, as uncertainty is always painful to the understanding, very slight evidence, if the subject be capable of no other, sometimes amounts to credibility. This every philosopher experiences in his researches into nature; and the observation may serve as an apology for the following jeu d'esprit; in which I shall attempt to shew, by the several analogies of organization, life, instinct, spontaneity, and self-motion, that plants, like animals, are endued with the powers, both of perception and enjoyment.

Vegetables bear so near a similitude to animals in their structure, that botanists have derived from anatomy and physiology, almost all the terms employed in the description of them. A tree or shrub, they inform us, consists of a cuticle, cutis, and

cellular membrane; of vessels variously disposed, and adapted to the transmission of different fluids; and of a ligneous, or bony substance, covering and defending a pith or marrow. Such organization evidently belongs not to inanimate matter; and when we observe, in vegetables, that it is connected with, or instrumental to the powers of growth, of self-preservation, of motion, and of seminal increase, we cannot hesitate to ascribe to them a living principle. And by admitting this attribute, we advance a step higher in the analogy we are pursuing. For, the idea of life naturally implies some degree of perceptivity: and wherever perception resides, a greater or less capacity for enjoyment seems to be its necessary adjunct. Indefinite and low, therefore, as this capacity may be, in each single herb, or tree, yet, when we consider the amazing extent of the vegetable kingdom, 'from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall,' the aggregate of happiness, produced by it, will be found to exceed our most enlarged conceptions. It is prejudice only, which restrains or suppresses the delightful emotions, resulting from the belief of such a diffusion of good. And, because the framers of systems have invented arrangements and divisions of the works of God, to aid the mind in the pursuits of science, we implicitly admit as reality, what is merely artificial; and adopt distinctions, without proof of any essential difference. *Lapides crescunt; vegetabilia crescunt et vivunt.*