

form of leaves, height, strength, produce, &c., we shall for the present think of with much less distinctness. All this happens naturally in accordance with what we have already learned in the 10th chapter; for the greater the number of traces of a like nature which have united to form one whole, so much the more clearly is this whole brought into consciousness, when stimulated by the exciting element, while it follows that a far less clear consciousness will be stirred up by the same element, acting on objects whose impressions are fewer, and points of agreement less numerous.

The constituent parts of each of these objects, *i. e.*, the roots, the stem, the branches, are indeed presented to the mind sevenfold, because in seven different objects, while what is peculiar to each is presented only once; so that our consciousness of the properties common to all, must of course be seven times clearer than of what is peculiar to each; this indeed for the time almost disappears. The homogeneous therefore being fuller of consciousness, because richer in traces than the individual, it follows that the larger portion of the exciting element must fall to its share. Hence, for the future, we so represent these objects, that the points of difference disappear from our consciousness, and we think only of the points of resemblance which they have in common, which have been as it were laid hold of all together by the consciousness. In this way we arrive at what is generally termed *an idea* of these objects (a general or collective representation). This idea is not lost when the consciousness passes onwards from it to other images, it merely lapses into unconsciousness, existing as a trace or impression, for that which is contained in it has received a special strong connection. What possesses roots, a stem, branches or twigs, we henceforth call shortly a tree.\*

What, therefore, must already be existing in the soul before an idea can be formed of its rise there? and what is it that takes place when several different perceptions are called into consciousness simultaneously or directly after one another? Why must the property common to a number of things which we think of together, come out far more distinctly in our consciousness than that which is peculiar only to one of them? Wherein then do *ideas* differ from ordinary single perceptions, or conceptions? shew how the ideas, bird, bush, insect, fish, have been formed in your soul?

#### SECTION XVI.—*Gradation and Modification of Ideas.*

We have seen in the foregoing paragraphs how ideas arise, that they form themselves spontaneously when the soul becomes conscious of the points of agreement on common attributes belonging to classes of objects. Mutual attraction brings, then, the like into ultimate connection with its like, and a permanent connection is formed between them, and this connection the soul retains as a special distinctive act of consciousness; and even when the consciousness is again lost, the trace or residuum remains. In doing this, the idea does not take anything from the perceptions to which it owes its existence, but it has and retains its consistence merely by means of the intimate blending of their elements of agreement. Without the exciting together of the perceptions which contain the points of resemblance, no idea could arise, while if the exciting cause is adequate, the idea is sure to follow.

As these ideas are general representations, so they are always adapted to a whole class of individual objects, while each separate perception is adapted only for the object from which it has arisen.

You shall now form some ideas for yourselves. Think of the following things: coat, vest, jacket, stockings, boots, shoes, gloves, &c. What do you think of collectively? Clothes; but how is this possible? I have not mentioned the idea clothes, but simply the

words coat, vest, &c. But all these things we use for the covering of our bodies, and we express them by one word, clothes.

Thus that which in each object is common to all (in being made use of for covering the body) has united to form one whole, and because the combination is *eight-fold*, made up of many traces, it speedily absorbs the entire consciousness, while the special characteristics of the various objects, as material, colour, shape, &c., disappear from the consciousness. Thus the idea "clothes" is formed. What is comprehended in it, or what does it include? But farther; I repeat the words knife, fork, plate, spoon, table-cloth, napkin, &c. What now do you think of? All these things we make use of during meals. Thus you have the idea—table furniture. What does it comprehend?

Again, plough, harrow, waggon, mattock, spade, rake, &c. What, now, do you think of? All these things are made use of by the husbandman for the cultivation of his land. Here you have the idea—agricultural implements. What is comprehended in it?

Reflect now on the three ideas just named, clothes, table furniture, agricultural implements. What is it which they all have in common? All clothes, furniture for the table, and implements of agriculture are made by man; here you have the idea—product of art. This comprehends the property common to each of these ideas, but what is comprehended underneath it?\*

There are comprehended not merely the ideas out of which it has directly arisen, but also the individual perceptions from which the ideas themselves took their rise. So, when points of similarity belonging to different ideas are combined and blended together from the ideas having been simultaneously excited, there then arises a new idea, which comprehends within itself, and as it were encircles, not merely these ideas themselves, but also all the individual perceptions out of which the different ideas arose. We justly call this a higher and wider idea (an idea of wider circumference). I will now mention a number of ideas with which you are familiar, tree, bush, fish, mountain, stone, cloud, star. Think now of something lying in all these which is exactly the opposite of what was contained in our last formed idea, and you will be able to tell what that is which all these ideas have in common. All trees, shrubs, fish, mountains, clouds, &c., are made by God. Here you have the idea, product of nature, for God works through nature. Now, reflect on both these ideas, products of nature and of art together. What is common to both? All products of nature and of art occupy space, and are perceived by the senses. Here you have the idea of body. What is comprehended under this, or what belongs to its circumference? (1) Not only the ideas, nature and art products; but also (2) all the former ideas out of which these have arisen; and consequently also (3) all the individual perceptions out of which the first were formed. Consequently, it is the highest and widest idea among all these.†

The result is thus reached, that in the human soul, the points of resemblance existing in different representations are attracted to one another and blend together, and thus arise ideas; and when these have also within them a common element, this again blends together, the like combining with the like, and thence are originated new and ever higher and wider ideas. The condition for this result being, that the existing fundamental conceptions (the individual perceptions, and the lower ideas, that is) in which the common element is contained, should be simultaneously excited.

Consider here, by way of repetition, the influence which the strength and the susceptibility of the original faculties has on the formation of ideas.

Ideas will be clear, strong in consciousness in proportion to the strength of the original faculties, they will be accurate in proportion to their susceptibility to external influences. Why do animals, although some of them are endowed with greater susceptibility in some of their original faculties than man, yet attain by it to no clear ideas? The cause lies solely and entirely in this, that the strength of original faculties possessed by man is wanting in them.

\* Each idea naturally comprehends or contains that of which it consists. There underlie the perceptions out of which it has arisen. The former is its substance, the latter, collectively, we call its circumference, and it is manifest that the substance of the idea (the idea itself) must lie in the perceptions which form its substance. The whole circumference of an idea we are wont to indicate by the words all, or each, its partial circumference by the expression some. So is it in the axioms, All men are mortal; Some men are learned.

† The formation of ideas certainly does not take place with the rapidity indicated in the above examples; we only mean to shew how and whence they arise.

\* In this way the greater part of ideas must have been formed in each soul entirely of themselves and without our help. That the formation of the idea tree should be preceded by that of particular kinds of trees, such as the oak, the pine, &c., is natural. With the rise of these (less general ideas) the points of similarity blend together still more, so that the representation of such an idea, on account of its many points of resemblance, demands a special term of description. Yet it happens in many, if not in most cases, that the idea tree has place in the mind of a child before that of any particular kind of tree. Are even all grown-up persons acquainted with the various kinds of trees which are found in their neighbourhood? And yet the idea of a tree exists with perfect clearness in their minds. Nor is it otherwise in regard to the various animals and minerals which surround us, unless we have applied ourselves particularly to observe their distinctions. It is of the objects that most frequently act upon our mind that we first obtain ideas. If these are special kind of things, then our first ideas will be special; if they are individuals of different kinds together, then there will rather be formed the idea of race or genus. The earlier rise of the idea of genus is moreover very much favoured by the custom most parents have of giving their children first the generic name instead of the individual. Thus bird instead of lark, fish instead of trout, tree instead of fir, &c., &c.