

association of certain ideas with actual sensations, that we are apt to consider the whole mixed cluster as one kind, and receive the whole with the belief which belongs to the sensation. Deceptions of this kind chiefly occur when the sensations are, from some cause, obscure or imperfect, and when the mind is under the influence of some strong emotion. How many ghost stories, that seem to be plausibly supported, may be well explained by separating with care what might easily have been perceived by the senses from the mode of accounting for such sensations, suggested to the mind when under the excitement of fear, sorrow, or enthusiastic feeling, and, in such circumstances, confounded with actual sensations, so as to appear to the memory of the same nature with them.

When these mistakes from ideas associated with our sensations are not intensified by strong emotion, they are easily corrected by the judgment, even in opposition to the feeling of the moment, so that we have no permanent false belief; as when the crossed fingers touching a smooth spherical substance have, from associations respecting the parts usually affected by one or by two distinct objects, the sensation as of two, though we are certain of the fact that there is but one; or, when the revolving circle of card seems to present to our vision a bird in a cage, or a tree in its summer foliage, though we are well aware that the image of the bird and the foliage is at one side, that of the cage and of the naked branches on the other, the combination depending on the rapid motion. The real cases of deception are only where a sensation occurs unexpectedly, under circumstances fitted to awaken some emotion, under the influence of which associated ideas are intensified so as to seem parts of what is perceived by the senses. In all cases when we view the subject philosophically, it is necessary cautiously to separate the actual sensations we receive from objects from the ideas excited in connection with them, and which are easily confounded with them. In such instances we do not really receive false or unreliable sensations, but only obscure ones, which the mind completes by its own associations; just as in dreams, the noise or touch which awakens us will, before it completes that work, suggest to the fancy means of accounting for it, which pass like scenes before our mental vision.

A little calmness and collectedness of mind, with the attempt to place ourselves in a more favourable position for observation, or to apply a second sense in aid of our inquiries, would save us from