

Thus Hume says, in his essay on the Standard of Taste, "Beauty is no quality of things themselves: it exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty." And so Dr. Reid, though in almost all his reasonings directly opposed to Hume, and though it may seem at variance with the fundamental principles of his own philosophy, and inconsistent with some of his own averments on the subject, seems to lean to the same opinion. "I apprehend," he says, "that it is in the moral and intellectual perfections of mind, and in its active powers, that beauty originally dwells; and that from this, as the fountain, all the beauty which we perceive in the visible world is derived." And, not to mention others, Dr. Alison, and notoriously Lord Jeffrey, have laboured hard, in their famous Essays on Beauty in trying to prove that it is not a property of things extra-mental and material at all, but only an emotion of the soul unconsciously projected on the canvass of nature through the power of habit and association. "That vast variety of objects to which we give the name of beautiful," says Jeffrey, "become entitled to that appellation, merely because they all possess the power of recalling or reflecting those sensations of which they have been the accompaniments, or with which they have been associated in an imagination by any other more casual bond of connection." Things are beautiful, according to these writers, only because they have become associated in our minds with some agreeable feeling or emotion in ourselves or in other sentient beings, or when they are the natural signs of such feelings or emotions, and are calculated to awaken the imagination and excite us to some pleasing train of thought, or when they bear some analogy or fanciful resemblance to things with which these emotions are necessarily connected.

It would be an endless task to consider in detail all the facts and illustrations which writers like those we have mentioned have amassed in support of their theory; but it may not be uninteresting to see by what process they might come to entertain the belief that beauty is not a quality of things themselves, but a something only with which we clothe the outer world. For assuredly men in general don't believe so. They say of a tree or flower that *it* is beautiful, and think accordingly. It never occurs to them to doubt it; and you might as well call in question the existence of the object as to try and get them to believe that it has no inherent beauty. There it is, they'll say: I see it; and seeing with them is believing.