

“But,” to borrow from one of the most ingenious of our Scottish metaphysicians, “in this, as in other instances in which nature has given us difficulties with which to cope, she has not left us to be wholly overcome.” “If,” says Dr Thomas Brown, in his remarks on the classifying principle, “if she has placed us in a labyrinth, she has at the same time furnished us with a clue which may guide us, not, indeed, through all its dark and intricate windings, but through those broad paths which conduct us into day. The single power by which we discover resemblance or relation in general is a sufficient aid to us in the perplexity or confusion of our first attempts at arrangement. It begins by converting thousands, and more than thousands, into one; and, reducing in the same manner the numbers thus formed, it arrives at last at the few distinctive characters of those great comprehensive tribes on which it ceases to operate, because there is nothing left to oppress the memory or the understanding.”

But is this all? Can the palæontologist but say that that classifying principle which in every other department of science yields such assistance to the memory is also of use in his, or but urge that it enables him to sort and arrange his facts, and that, by converting one idea into the type and exemplar of many resembling ones, it imparts to him an ability of carrying not inadequate conceptions of the mighty whole in his mind? If this were all, you might well ask, Why obtrude upon us, in connection with *your* special science, a common semi-metaphysical idea, equally applicable to all the sciences,—in especial, for example, to that botany which is the science of existing plants, and to that zoology which is the science of existing animals? Nay, I reply, but it is not all. I refer to this classifying principle because, while it exists in relation to all other sciences as a principle—to use the words of the metaphysician just quoted—“given to us by nature,”—as a principle of the *mind within*,—it exists in