

NOTES ON THE NOSE.

UNDOUBTEDLY the most neglected and ill-used part of the human face is the nose. The poetical literature of all nations extols the other features: the eyes, for instance, have furnished a theme for the most sublime poetry; cheeks, with their witching dimples and captivating tints, have drawn forth some of the finest similes that were ever invented; and the raptures which have been indited concerning lips, it would take an age to enumerate. The hair, also, has from time immemorial been intensified into "silken tresses" in printed, as well as manuscript verses; and "sonnets to a mistress's eyebrow" are of continual occurrence; but it may be safely averred, that in the universal anthology of civilised or uncivilised man, there is not to be found a truly sentimental effusion to a nose! Indeed, so far from exciting any of the graver emotions of the mind, it would appear that there is a hidden something in that feature to deaden, rather than to excite, sentiment. The cheeks, whether pale with care, or red with blushing, strongly excite the sympathies: a glance of the eye is all-powerful in calling up the most vivid emotions; but who ever remembers any very intense feeling being awakened by a twitch of the nose? On the contrary, that unfortunate feature seems to have been especially appropriated by humorists to cut their jibes upon. It has, from the earliest ages, been made the subject of disparaging and sportive remarks. It has been set up as a mark to be hit by ridicule—as a butt for the arrows of satire; as if it were an organ, proper to be played upon by nothing but wit. We may grow eloquent concerning eyes, speak raptures of lips, and even sentimentalise upon chins, but the bare mention of the nasal promontory is certain to excite a smile. What the latent quality may be which is so productive of risibility in this instance, it seems difficult to discover, for, in point of utility, the physiologist will tell you that the nose is quite on a par with the rest of the face. To it the respiratory system owes the ingress and egress of a great portion of the food of life—air. To it we are indebted for the sense of smell. Moreover, it acts as the emunctuary of the brain. In an ornamental point of view, the physiognomist declares that the nose is a main element of facial beauty; and without stopping to inquire how very much this depends upon its shape, we may just corroborate the fact, by hinting the unpicturesque effect which is produced by a countenance that happens to be bereft of the nasal appendage.

The authority of physiognomists may, indeed, be almost taken without examination; for they

are undoubtedly, of all connoisseurs, the greatest in noses. Their prototypes, the augurs of old, went so far as to judge of a man's character by the shape of his nose; and this has been in some degree justified by a French writer, who appears to be deeply versed in the subject. "Though," he asserts, "the organ is only susceptible of a moderate degree of action, while the passions are agitating the rest of the countenance, yet these limited motions are performed with great ease." In addition to this, we find Sir Charles Bell remarking, in his "Anatomy and Physiology of Expression," "that the nostrils are features which have a powerful effect in expression. The breath being drawn through them, and their structure formed for alternate expansion and contraction in correspondence with the motions of the chest, they are an index of the condition of respiration, when affected by emotion." The nose may therefore be regarded as somewhat indicative of, and in harmony with, the character of the individual.

It is probably by reason of this connection of the external nose with the internal characteristics, that so many proverbs and axioms have taken rise in reference to both. Thus, the French say of a clever man, that he has a "fine nose;" of a prudent one, that his is a "good nose;" of a proud man, that "he carries his nose in the air." An inquisitive person is said to "poke his nose everywhere." A gourmand is described as always having his nose in his plate: that of the scholar is declared to be always in his books. When an individual is growing angry under provocation, the French also say, "the mustard rises in his nose." Neither are we in this country deficient of similar sayings. A man, for instance, who does not form very decisive opinions—who is swayed more by the persuasions of others, than by his own judgment—is described as being "led by the nose." The same is said when any strong inducement turns a person aside from a previously-formed intention; thus Shakspeare—

"Though authority be a stubborn bear,
Yet he is often led by the nose with gold."

Individuals not blessed with much acuteness or forethought, are said "not to see beyond their noses." Others who, to do some injury to an enemy, injure themselves, are declared "to cut off the nose to spite the face." The condition of a supplanted rival is described as that of a person who "has had his nose put out of joint;" with a hundred other proverbs in which the nose takes a most prominent part. All of these, it will be observed, are of a comic cast; while every simile and allusion made to the eyes, the brow, and the other features, is of the most serious and poetical character. If, therefore, the ordinary organ, considered and alluded to in the abstract, be provo-