

surgeon; but in private practice, particularly in this province, it would be difficult and inconvenient: however, to those who dread the knife, compression offers perhaps a more pleasant alternative, and no doubt will be preferred.

ART. XXXI.—*On the importance and value of Arithmetic as applied to Medicine.* By HENRY MELVILLE, M. D. Continued from No. 4, p. 147.

ON resuming the consideration of this interesting subject, I purpose reviewing the arguments adduced in favour of the numerical system, in a similar manner to that in which I stated those which are generally brought forward in opposition to it, in the first part of my communication. In doing this, I shall pursue the plan adopted by me in the first instance, and make use of my authorities en masse, without reference to any individual statement or opinion, unless it should appear to require particular comment.

To meet the objection based on the doctrine of probabilities, it is asserted that even on subjects which are usually brought within the operation of this law, the supposed similarity of events does not always exist, nor does the difference or variation observable in them admit of that strict numerical estimation upon which their value as data should depend, in the construction of the theory. This argument is thus ingeniously illustrated. In throwing a die, and computing the probability of certain results, it is supposed that its six faces are perfectly and exactly equal in linear extent, and evenness of superficies; a supposition which can rarely, if ever, be correct, but is most frequently erroneous. Yet notwithstanding these defects of the materials, and the error of the hypothesis founded on their supposed exactitude, we shall find that the person who, from previous investigation of results, knew that in throwing two dice, deuce-ace was a far more likely cast than double sixes, would have an immense advantage in his play over another who was entirely ignorant of this fact, for the great superiority of the probability would almost always counterbalance the inequality of the dice. It is therefore very possible, that a beginner unskilled in this doctrine of chances, might suppose each of these throws to be equally probable. The same error obtains with respect to medical facts and would appear to arise from the circumstance that in reasoning on a stated occurrence, the entire weight is given to the vague and general impressions produced on the mind by certain peculiarities or characteristics of disease, rather than in computing the events in a large number of cases. This mistake has been made by some very distinguished physicians, who appear to have been completely deceived in many instances. It was stated by Corvisart that dilatation with thinning of the walls of the heart was common,