

experiments upon the sympathetic in this essay, though I might have quoted almost any number of them, for the reason that I put very little confidence in the deductions drawn from them. To divide large sympathetic trunks, or to remove large sympathetic ganglia must cause a disturbance of the system at large which would necessarily mask the peculiar effects flowing from the lesion of the nerves operated on, and any one who has paid attention to the literature of this subject cannot have failed to notice how contradictory are the positions supposed to be established by these means. Without denying that experiment may in the future throw light upon this branch of physiology, I think it is safe to say that it has thrown very little light upon it yet.

(5) If there is one fact in relation to the function of the great sympathetic better established than any other it is that this nervous system exercises a most decided control over the process of nutrition. Now I beg of you to consider for a moment what a curious relationship exists between this process of nutrition and the habitual state of the moral nature. The best observer of man that ever lived on this planet makes Caesar say to Antony:—

“Let me have men about me that are fat ;

Yond’ Cassius hath a lean and hungry look ;
He thinks too much ; such men are dangerous.

Would he were fatter* * *

* * * he loves no plays,
* * * he hears no music,

Seldom he smiles ; and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock’d himself, and scorned his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart’s ease,

And therefore are they very dangerous.”

Shakespeare says, what we all know is the rule that men in whom dwell a preponderance of evil passions, such as hate, envy, and jealousy, are ill-nourished. The converse of this is as notorious, so that fat and jolly go together as naturally as do any two terms in the language. Not only does this general law hold, though liable to many exceptions from the operations of other laws interfering with it, but we find it equally true that any long-continued inordinate passion, be it sexual love, hate, envy, or grief, is capable of influencing nutrition in a marked manner. Long-continued thought does not produce any such effect, if it seems to do so sometimes it is because the student deprives himself of proper air, exercise, or sleep, in his ardent devotion to knowledge. Newton was as fat when he finished the *Principia* as when he began it. The writing of the *Novum Organum* did not reduce Bacon’s weight a pound. Shakespeare, in whose splendid brain fermented all the ideas of his time, and it was a time perhaps, of more ideas than the present, much as we pride ourselves in this respect, was a well nourished man. The moral natures of Newton and Bacon were calm and serene, Shakespeare’s heart glowed with a genuine love of humanity. If the moral nature be equally with the intellectual a function of some part of the cerebro-spinal nervous system, why are the undoubted functions of the great sympathetic so intimately connected with the one and so entirely unconnected with the other?

I must now, gentlemen, close this imperfect sketch of a most important, and, to me at least, most interesting subject. The conclusions at which I have arrived in my own mind from the arguments mentioned here, and from many others that I have not had time to-day to bring forward, are as follows : 1. The great sympathetic is a nerve of motion to unstriped muscle. 2. It is not endowed with sensation. 3. It exercises a controlling influence over the functions of the secreting glands. 4. It governs nutrition. 5. It is the nervous centre of the moral nature.

One word more. I wish to tell you my whole mind on this subject, and it