

laws of the nervous system are not even tolerably ascertained. We speak obscurely of it; and shelter ourselves under the general term of sympathy, spasm, &c. which are used with as little precision now, as malignantly and leniently were employed of old.

VAN HELMONT was the first who attended to the nervous system, and advanced the doctrine of the Archæus, as the proximate cause of disease. Several had been advancing the science of the nerves, but he says (Dr. Whytt,) had done more than all the rest. He considered the subject as still far from being exhausted, and of the highest consequence to explain the condition of the body, in sickness or health. We suppose, says the doctor, that in the phenomena of the nervous system, there is a series of the three conditions; 1st, an impression made on the organ of sense, or sentient part; 2nd, in consequence of this, there is a perception created in the common organ of sense, *sensorium commune*; 3d, there is a motion or contraction excited in the moving fibres, which depend upon the nerves. We call these from Gaubius, impression, perception, irritation. All phenomena are comprehended under these three. Of these three conditions, the intermediate link is perception, and on it the other two depend. This link, perception, is the foundation of all our internal operations: being derived from the immaterial power within us, and connected with our material part.

This *immaterial power* may be left out in medicine; for if contraction necessary follows perception, and perception as necessarily follows impression, we have no more occasion to take notice of it as a sentient principle, than if it were a mechanical cause. The doctor, however, shows that impression may excite irritation, and often does without the intervention of perception; and shows the absurdity of Stahl and his followers, by asserting that the soul is conscious of every impression. There are, says the doctor, a variety of impressions, which are not at all attended to by perception; or, if we perceive, it is the effects, and not the impressions themselves. As to perception, it always depends on impression; so that the

old saying is very true; *nil in intellectu quod non fecit prius in sensu.** These impressions are varied by the *sensorium commune*, or origin of the nerves. Irritation depends constantly on perception or impression.

This system so carefully arranged, and the investigation of the nervous system conducted and investigated by him, with a success which has no parallel, has nevertheless been denounced uncertain, incomprehensible, and disastrous. He has been charged with overlooking, or but slightly glancing at the pathology of the blood vessels, in his concentrated views of the nervous system. And by adopting the *nasology* of Sauvages, Linnæus and Vogel, he has unfortunately, led physicians, says Dr. Rush, to prescribe for the names of diseases, instead of their proximate cause.

It is sufficient to jar the foundations of the firmest confidence in medical skill, to find the professors in that science, but rising, as it were, to overthrow each other, to show that a false pathology, or a corrupt practice, had pervaded the system from the origin of the science. It is, indeed, melancholy to reflect, that the industry and labor of man, should be thus buried and forgotten with his bones.

*Nothing gains entrance to the mind but through the senses.

TRITUMPH.—South Carolina is redeemed from her oppressive medical law; Thomsonians are now free there. This is the tenth state where the public opinion has compelled the legislature to repeal the laws intended to crush the Thomsonian practice. So we go! Steam is onward.—*Thomsonian* 1839.

Owing to the gross ignorance of the great mass of the people upon medical subjects, a doctor can much easier cheat a man out of his life than out of a shilling, and that too without a possibility of being detected.—*Buchan*.

In medical writings, it is much easier to make a show of great learning, than to write in a plain familiar manner.—*Dr. Buchan*.