

Irritation is either local or general, and its effects are communicated from one part to another, through the medium of the nervous system, so that the heart, brain, and stomach, almost immediately after an injury has been sustained, even in the remotest parts of the body, will have their functions more or less disturbed in proportion to the extent of the injury, and the importance of the part injured. All the actions of the body are excited and sustained by internal and external impressions, which are called stimulants : the blood, for instance, being the stimulus to the blood vessels ; the bile to the intestines ; and caloric in a certain degree, a stimulus to the whole system. Between all the different parts of the human frame there exist intimate relations, which correspond with each other, and carry on a reciprocal intercourse of actions. The beautiful harmony produced by these concurrent phenomena is called sympathy. Thus impressions not only produce effects on the part on which they are directly applied, but in consequence of the freedom of communication between the nervous system, parts of the body situated at a distance from those in which the original mischief exists become affected by them : the real nature of sympathy is yet unknown, but we are acquainted with many of its effects. Thus numerous examples of sympathetic actions may be adduced ; the communication which exists between the arteries and breasts is a striking instance of it. Sneezing is a sympathetic action between the nose, velum palati, and the abdominal muscles ; also coughing, breathing, and the expulsion of the fæces, are a few among the numerous examples which might be enumerated.

But sympathetic action is also the result of injury and disease, becoming the cause of restoration on the one hand, or of destruction on the other, and this state of the body I call Irritation. Irritation, gentlemen, may be defined to be an altered action, excited in the system by an unnatural impression. The sympathetic pain is experienced in the knee and foot from diseased hip, and at the extremity of the penis when there is stone in the bladder. The passage of an urinary calculus through the ureter occasions retraction of the testicles and pain in the thigh ; disease of the prostate causes pain on the inside of one or both thighs. A disease of the liver occasions pain in the shoulder ; a diseased testicle, pain in the loins ; irritation of the intestines, an itching of the nose.

These sympathetic effects which we have been just describing do not consist of morbid actions in the parts thus af-