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ART. XXXI.—*Morbid appearance in a case of Chorea—the connexion of this disease with Imbecility and an alteration in the Substance of the Brain, by DR. WILLIAM AITKEN, M.D., Demonstrator of Anatomy, &c.*

UNDER the above title I propose to publish in this JOURNAL the history of cases and dissections which may from time to time come under my notice, and which illustrate some of those principles of Pathology which have been established by anatomical and physiological study, or indicate methods of research, by which the existence of organic change may be demonstrated in cases thereto regarded as entirely of a functional character.

Convulsive diseases of the nervous system have hitherto, for the most part, baffled the attempts of the morbid anatomist to associate them with structural changes of a characteristic or constant kind: and the accounts of the pathological observations which have been made in these diseases, though very numerous, have not yet assumed the form of a pathological law, by which the occurrence of their symptoms may be explained. Such diseases as tetanus, hydrophobia, epilepsy, and cholera, particularly illustrate these statements.

It is obvious that the pathology of such diseases must be mainly grounded on the ascertained functions of the nervous system; and we may with confidence recommend the remarks made by R. B. Todd in the Linnæian Lectures for 1849, as clearly shewing the direction in which observation ought to be extended in such diseases, with the view of confirming or modifying opinions regarding their pathology.

As a comparison of the specific gravity of the central parts of the opposite hemispheres of the brain, in the case of cholera described in the following article, has furnished some unexpected results, I have deemed them worthy of being recorded; and it is hoped, that when its history, as detailed by Dr. Weir, is connected with some collateral details in the pathology of similar cases, and with the recently published and valuable records of the specific gravity of the cerebral substance in health and disease, some additional interest may be attached to a case, which otherwise is in no respect different from many which are already familiar to the profession.