

terior, or smaller of the semicircular canals; H, the posterior, or largest semicircular canal; A, the outer, or smallest canal.

Hearing is simple in its arrangement, and beautifully adapted to the purposes of life, and contributes remarkably to some of our most exquisite and refined enjoyments. The organ of hearing consists of a nerve, gifted with peculiar qualities, upon the surface of a delicate membrane; there is also connected with this a piece of cartilage, in the form of a funnel, leading to the internal parts. The bottom of this tubular cartilage is truncated obliquely, and its aperture closed by a firm membrane stretched across it, which separates this external part of the ear from the middle portion of the organ. Beyond this membrane we meet with a small cavity hollowed out in bone, which is termed the barrel of the tympanum. There are several openings into it, but there is one most important to us here: it is the inward aperture of a tube, the only extremity of which opens at the hinder part of the nose, behind and above the palate, through which the air is admitted with an equality of force to the pressure of the atmosphere on the opposite side of the membrane. Across the cavity there is extended a series of small bones, the exterior of which is attached to the membrane we have just mentioned. The most internal of them (four in number) is firmly connected with another membrane, which together shuts up the entrance to a deeper cavity called the labyrinth. This last hollow—excavated as it were in the solid bone—consists of a middle portion, irregular in appearance, from which different channels proceed in various directions, and finally return, with the exception of one only, to the same chamber. All these passages are lined by a membrane on which the extremity of the auditory nerve is expanded in different shapes; from these it is collected into one trunk, and goes on to a particular part of the brain, thus completing the communication between the external agent and the sensorium. The four small bones of the tympanum which help the hearing are as follows: First, the malleus or hammer; the upper part of its round head rests upon the concavity of the tympanum. This bone has several muscles, which move it in different directions and cause it to stretch or brace the membrana tympani when we wish to hear with accuracy. Connected