

will ensue, as would have happened if the affection had been of a contagious nature. Although in contact, if unabsorbed, the matter excites no morbid action whatever, and is therefore not contagious.

3. By breaking the cuticle and bringing the liquid virus in contact with the cutaneous absorbents, which take it up and convey it into the system, which becomes contaminated. Communicated in this way, the disease is much milder than when communicated in the second mode, because less matter is received into the system—the effect of a poison or of a medicine being in the common sense way of reasoning and philosophizing somewhat in proportion to quantity or dose. This is called “the mode by inoculation.”

4. Dr. Gregory tells us that the matter of the pustules or scabs may be applied to the unbroken surface of the skin or to the mucous membrane of the nose, and be absorbed.” “This,” he says, “is called the mode by contagion.” “but,” continues he, “it must be admitted that the terms contagion and infection are often used indiscriminately to express the silent, or as we say casual reception of the germ.” Coming as it does from the pen of a distinguished professor and author, this quotation may be deemed and taken as a fair specimen of professional accuracy. It shows clearly the difficulty we wish to get rid of. Let us examine Dr. Gregory’s “mode by contagion.” “The matter of the pustules or scabs,” says he, “may be applied to the unbroken surface of the skin.” How is it to “be applied to the unbroken surface of the skin,” while the cuticle remains entire? If the cuticle is broken, and the matter applied to the unbroken surface of the skin, it amounts, *de facto*, to inoculation, and absorption of course would follow; but if there was no absorption, then there would be no disease, as we have already affirmed, and have a right to infer from Dr. Gregory’s own statement; but if it had been the matter of contagion the specific disease would have ensued without absorption, “Applied to the mucous membrane of the nose,” how, we would

* The cuticle is an insensible “unorganic body,” which (according to Cruveilhier) is moulded upon the surface of the dermis and its papillæ, like a coat of varnish, and protects them from the action of external agents; and we add more particularly of such “external agents” as are capable of being taken up by the cutaneous absorbents. It is unnecessary to recount the experiments which have been made from time to time, in reference to this question of cutaneous absorption.