

We are charged with the crime of affirming that the routine practice of applying the same remedies to all diseases must have proved injurious to health or even to life in many instances. This we re-assert. More than two years ago we published a striking instance of a life sacrificed by the want of all attention on the part of Mr. A. to the investigation of a disease. A most dangerous disease was going on in the head, and the surgeon would only look at the tongue, strictly prohibiting a word to be spoken by the patient or his wife. The man died at Bayswater of the overlooked disease, and was examined in company with another medical man. This case we published at the time, but Mr. A. never answered it. Yet we are now accused to giving a kick to the dead lion!

LXIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON MENTAL DERANGEMENT; BEING AN APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PHRENOLOGY TO THE ELUCIDATION OF THE CAUSES, SYMPTOMS, NATURE, AND TREATMENT OF INSANITY. By ANDREW COMBE, M.D. Pp. xxxvi. 392, 12mo. Edinburgh and London, 1831.

DR. COMBE, in these "Observations," exhibits a general view of the brain and nervous system, and shews that, during life, every act of sensation however slight—and every act of perception, however feeble, every affection and moral emotion indeed, and every intellectual operation, are inseparably related to, and influenced by, a corresponding affection of the material organs with which the Creator has connected them. Hence, he refers the origin of mental derangement to disturbance of cerebral action, and explains how the intensity and proneness to activity of the mind's various faculties, are greatly modified by the relative size of their respective cerebral organs, in conformity with a universal law which pervades animate and inanimate nature, and is applicable to the brain and ner-

vous system in common with all other parts. He maintains, that this condition of relative size, hitherto overlooked, is highly influential in *modifying*, often in *favouring*, the action of the numerous causes of disease by which we are constantly surrounded, and that, next to the hereditary tendency transmitted from parent to child, it is the most powerful of those conditions which predispose an individual to the invasion of insanity. Dr. C. next examines the various conditions required for the healthy action of the brain, and for the full development of the mental powers: in neglect of these conditions, and in contravention of others, he finds fruitful sources of nervous and mental disease: he shews that, in accordance with this observation, every circumstance to which mental derangement can be attributed, acts with a frequency and energy proportioned to the previous susceptibility of the patient, and to the directness with which it affects the nervous function: and, by analyzing the multifarious symptoms accompanying insanity, he discovers most of them in disturbed function of some nervous part, and points out the light in which they ought to be viewed as *signs* of the bodily state from which they originate. He considers next, the duration, periodicity, terminations, and symptomatic forms of the different cerebral affections on which insanity depends, and then explains the affinity existing between these affections and the numerous other disorders to which the nervous system, partially or generally, is liable. Taking a view of the necrotomical appearances connected with deranged mind, the Doctor shews—that the same analogy subsists between the brain and other organs, in its diseases, as holds between them in their healthy conditions;—that, if disorder of cerebral function is sometimes the only *sign* of morbid action, so likewise is disordered function occasionally the only *symptom* of disease in other parts;—that, when mental derangement prevails without leaving, after death, any appreciable change of structure in the brain, or when alterations of the cerebral structure are found where, during life, no sign indi-

count their presence, so also the exact counterpart of this occurs with other organs in which violent and even fatal disorder takes place, without leaving any organic lesion to mark its previous existence;—and that, on the other hand, organic changes are detected by dissection, in parts where, during life, no corresponding disturbance of function indicated their development. Lastly, combining the results of his previous expositions, Dr. C. sketches out rules of treatment, medical and moral, in harmony with the existing state for which we are required to prescribe, and in harmony also with those leading principles in physiology, therapeutics, and pathology, by which we are accustomed to direct our curative efforts in all other bodily diseases, but which have hitherto been imperfectly applied in treating a class of affections second to none in inherent interest, or in importance to mankind. Dr. C.'s "Observations" abound with the results of deep practical reflection, and must be studied, in order to be rightly understood and appreciated: they are distinguished remarkably by the pure eloquence of Candour and the dignified persuasiveness of Philosophy;—altogether, the work is not surpassed by any one, of its kind, in medical science.

NOTE.—A comprehensive analytical review of Dr. C.'s book is in preparation by one of our correspondents, but the article has been unexpectedly delayed by his other engagements.

LXIV.

SPINAL IRRITATION.

MR. REES, of Landilo, has published the following short case in our cotemporary, the London Medical and Surgical Journal.

William Jones, æt. two years and a half, a healthy, strong, and well-grown boy, had the misfortune of losing all command over his right lower extremity, in June, 1830. In the evening he was observed to be cheerful, and walking about in his usual manner, but

when taken out of bed the following morning, he was discovered, to the no moderate grief of his parents, to be incapable of the slightest motion. In a few days after this happened, I was requested to attend him, and from my notes, I find that he was then very feverish, and that his stomach and bowels were in a very disordered state. I soon reinstated him in good general health, by the exhibition of purgative medicines; and as I then conceived the state of his limb to be, in a great degree, if not entirely, dependent on the disordered state of his digestive organs, I expected an improvement in the former, when the latter should be brought to execute their proper functions. But in this I was disappointed. The parents, not finding their boy's leg immediately beginning to improve, consulted (as is generally the case with the middle and lower class of this country) another surgeon, I therefore had no opportunity of trying other remedies, until I returned from the metropolis in June last, when I was entreated to attend the boy again. The following are the notes I then took:—Cannot move his right leg in the slightest degree; sensibility much diminished in this limb; its muscles are very flaccid; it is smaller than the left leg in circumference; its temperature is below par. The fulness of the glutæi muscles of the right side, much less than the glutæi of the left. He seems to experience no pain when his leg is moved about, or when extended, and the sole of the foot, strongly tapped with the hand. Bowels regular, and general health very good.

In examining the spine, I discovered some tenderness on pressure in the lower part of the lumbar region and upper part of the sacrum. I immediately applied a cupping-glass to the tender part of the back, and took away about an ounce and a half of blood. The following day he asked his mother to let him down, that he might walk; she indulged him in this, and to her great joy, he managed to limp along for some yards. Since then he has been again cupped, and counter-irritation has been kept up in the back for some weeks, by the ung. antim. tart. The