

is adequate to the complete renovation of every portion of the living fabric.*

Imperfect as is our knowledge of organic chemistry, we see enough to convince us that a series of the most refined and artificial operations is required, in order to bring about the complicated and elaborate arrangements of elements which constitute both animal and vegetable products. Thus, in the very outset of this, as of every other inquiry in Physiology, we meet with evidences of profound intention and consummate art, infinitely surpassing not only the power and resources, but even the imagination of man.

Much as the elaborate and harmonious mechanism of an animal body is fitted to excite our admiration, there can be no doubt that a more extended knowledge of that series of subtle processes, consisting of chemical combinations and decompositions which are continually going on in the organic laboratory of living beings, would reveal still greater wonders, and would fill us with a more fervent admiration of the infinite art and prescience which are even now manifested to us in every department both of the vegetable and animal economy.

The processes by which all these important purposes are fulfilled, comprise a distinct class of functions, the final object of which may be termed *Nutrition*, that is, the reparation of the waste of the substance of the organs, their maintenance in the state fitting them for the exercise of their respective offices, and the application of properly prepared materials to their development and growth.

The functions subservient to nutrition may be distinguished according as the processes they comprise relate to seven principal periods in the natural order of their succession. The first series of processes has for its objects the reception of the materials from without, and their preparation and gradual conversion into proper nutriment, that is, into matter having the same chemical properties with the substance

* See the article "Aor" in the Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine, where I have enlarged upon this subject.