

aorta, and it proceeds in a more direct course from the heart than the artery of the left arm, which has its origin in common with the artery of that side of the head. Hence it has been inferred that the right arm is originally better supplied with nourishment than the left. It may be alleged, in confirmation of this view, that in birds, where any inequality in the actions of the two wings would have disturbed the regularity of flight, the aorta, when it has arrived at the centre of the chest, divides with perfect equality into two branches, so that both wings receive precisely the same quantity of blood; and the muscles, being thus equally nourished, preserve that equality of strength, which their function rigidly demands.

When a large quantity of blood is wanted in any particular organ, and yet the force with which it would arrive, if sent immediately by large arteries, might injure the texture of that organ, contrivances are adopted for diminishing its impetus, either by making the arteries pursue very winding and circuitous paths, or by subdividing them, before they reach their destination, into a great number of smaller arteries. The delicate texture of the brain, for instance, would be greatly injured by the blood being impelled with any considerable force against the sides of the vessels which are distributed to it; and yet a very large supply of blood is required by that organ for the due performance of its functions. Accordingly we find that all the arteries which go to the brain are very tortuous in their course; every flexure tending considerably to diminish the force of the current of blood.

In animals that graze, and keep their heads for a long time in a dependent position, the danger from an excessive impetus in the blood flowing towards the head is much greater than in other animals; and we find that an extraordinary provision is made to obviate this danger. The arteries which supply the brain, on their entrance into the basis of the skull, suddenly divide into a great number of minute branches, forming a complicated net-work of vessels, an ar-