

CHAPTER VII.

PERCEPTION.

THE object of nature in establishing the organizations we have been reviewing is to produce certain modified impressions on the extremities of particular nervous filaments provided to receive them; but these impressions constitute only the commencement of the series of corporeal changes which terminate in sensation; for they have to be conveyed along the course of the nerves to the brain, or central organ of the nervous system,* where, again, some physical change must take place, before the resulting affection of the mind can be produced. The particular part of the brain, where this last physical change, immediately preceding the mental change, takes place, is termed the *Sensorium*. Abundant proofs exist that all the physical changes here referred to really occur, and, also, that they occur in this order of succession; for they are invariably found to be dependent on the healthy state, not only of the nerve, but, also, of the brain: thus, the destruction, or even compression of the nerve, in any part of its course between the external organ and the sensorium, totally prevents sensation; and the like result ensues from even the slightest pressure made on the sensorium itself.

Although the corporeal or physical change taking place in the sensorium, and the mental affection we term sensation, are linked together by some inscrutable bond of connexion,

* It is usual to designate the end of the nerve which is next to the sensorium, as the origin of that nerve; whereas, it should more properly be regarded as its termination; for the series of changes which end in sensation commence at the organ of sense, and are thence propagated along the nerve to the sensorium.