

the subject of the nervous system, and of our blindness to the benevolent adaptation of the endowments of that system to the condition of animal existence. Thus, it has been supposed that some nerves are more coarsely provided for sensation, and that others are of a finer quality, adapted to more delicate impressions. It is assumed that the nerve of the eye is finer than the nerve of the finger—without considering that the retina is insensible to that quality of matter of which we readily acquire the knowledge through touch. Nerves are, indeed, appropriated to peculiar senses, and to the bestowing of distinct functions, but delicacy of texture has nothing to do with this. The nerve of touch in the skin is insensible to light or to sound, not because it has a coarser or more common texture: the beauty and perfection of the system is, that each nerve is made susceptible to its peculiar impression only. The nerve of the skin is alone capable of giving the sense of contact, as the nerve of vision is confined to its own office. If this appropriation resulted merely from a more delicate texture: if the retina were sensible to the matter of light only from possessing a finer sensibility than the nerve of touch, it would be a source of torment; whereas it is most beneficently provided that it shall not be sensible to pain, nor be capable of conveying any impressions to the mind, but those which