

The fact of the exquisite sensibility of the surface, in comparison with the deeper parts, being thus ascertained by daily experience, we cannot mistake the intention: that the skin is made a safeguard to the delicate textures which are contained within, by forcing us to avoid injuries: and it does afford us a more effectual defence than if our bodies were covered with the hide of the rhinoceros.

The fuller the consideration which we give to this subject, the more convincing are the proofs that the painful sensibility of the skin is a benevolent provision, making us alive to those injuries, which, but for this quality of the nervous system, would bruise and destroy the internal and vital parts. In pursuing the inquiry, we learn with much interest that when the bones, joints, and all the membranes and ligaments which cover them, are exposed—they may be cut, pricked, or even burned, without the patient or the animal, suffering the slightest pain. These facts must appear to be conclusive; for who, witnessing these instances of insensibility, would not conclude that the parts were devoid of sensation. But when we take the true, philosophical, and I may say the religious view of the subject, and consider that pain is not an evil, but given for benevolent purposes and for some important object, we should be unwilling to terminate the investigation here.