

OF THE ORGAN OF TOUCH.

Touch is that peculiar sensibility which gives the consciousness of the resistance of external matter, and makes us acquainted with the hardness, smoothness, roughness, size, and form of bodies. It enables us to distinguish what is external from what belongs to us ; and while it informs us of the geometrical qualities of bodies, we must refer to this sense also our judgment of distance, of motion, of number, and of time.

Presuming that the sense of touch is exercised by means of a complex apparatus—by a combination of the consciousness of the action of the muscles with the sensibility of the proper nerves of touch, we shall, in the first place, examine in what respect the organization resembles that of the other senses.

We have said before that, on the most minute examination of the extremity of a nerve, no appropriate structure can be detected ; and that the nerves expanded on the organs of sense appear every where the same,—soft, pulpy, prepared for impression, and so distributed that the impression shall reach them. What is termed the structure of the organ of sense, is that apparatus by which the external impression is conveyed inwards, and by which its force is concentrated on the extremity of the nerve.