

IV.

A Treatise on Acupuncturation: being a Description of a Surgical Operation, originally peculiar to the Japonese and Chinese, now introduced into European Practice; with Directions for its Performance, and Cases illustrating its Success. By JAMES MORSS CHURCHILL, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. 1821.

THE operation of acupuncturation was made known in Europe, and recommended in the cure of rheumatism and gout, as early as the seventeenth century. Tavernier, an entertaining French traveller, mentioned it in 1676; and an account of it may be found in the Philosophical Transactions*. The operation has also been recommended by Wilhelm ten-Rhynet, by Bidlou†, Vicq d'Azyr‡, and Kæmpfer§. Pallas found it practised among the Ostiacks; and the majority of travellers make mention of its employment in countries situate far beyond the Ganges.

We consider the present attempt of Mr. Churchill to introduce acupuncturation into British practice deserving of our notice, both from the judicious and unassuming manner in which the endeavour is made, and because we really do think that such an operation may be serviceable in the affections against which it has been employed in Eastern practice. We can see no reason for condemning any particular method of cure until it has been actually tried, and found inefficacious. The cases which the author has given, are very interesting. The relief afforded by the operation was both immediate and permanent.

The instrument that Mr. Churchill employs, is the one improved by Mr. Jukes, and which appears to be the best adapted of any for the purpose. The method to be employed is the following:—

“ The handle of the needle being held between the thumb and fore-finger, and its point brought into contact with the skin covering the part affected, it is pressed gently, whilst a rotatory motion is given

* No. 148.

† Dissert. de Arthritide, Lond. 1683; et in Libello ad Histor. Med. Japoniæ. Haller Bibl. Med. pr. iii. p. 256.

‡ Dissert. de Puncto. Lugd. Bat. 1709.

§ Vicq d'Azyr, Œuvres, &c. &c. See Journal Général de Médecine, t. xxiii. p. 89.

§ Amœn. Exoticæ, fasc. iii. observ. ii. p. 582.

it by the finger and thumb, which gradually insinuates it into the part; and by continuing this rolling, the needle penetrates to any depth with facility and ease. The operator should now and then stop to ask if the patient be relieved; and the needle should always be allowed to remain five or six minutes before it is withdrawn."

This mode of introducing the instrument neither produces hæmorrhage nor pain; for the fibres are rather separated than divided by the passing of the needle. The introduction of more than one is seldom requisite.

Mr. Churchill forbears giving any theory respecting the rationale of the remedy.

There appears to be but one way in which it can act; and which may be explained conformably to the theories of those very learned and ingenious physiologists, K. Sprengel, and G. Prochaska, which refers those diseases to certain states of the galvanic influence, present in the nervous and muscular fibres, different from that necessary to the healthy functions of the part.

PART III.

ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS

IN THE DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL SCIENCE AND LITERATURE.

De Curandis Hominum Morbis, Epitome Prælectionibus Academicis dicata: Auctore JOANNE PETRO FRANK, Augustissimi Imperatoris totius Russiæ Consil. Statûs Actuali et Medico, &c. &c. Libri vi. De Retentionibus, Pars 3. Viennæ, 1821. pp. 430.

THE first volume of this work made its appearance about twenty years since. The intervening ones came out at irregular intervals; and at the present day there remain several parts to be published before the undertaking can be fulfilled. It is true, that complete editions (as they have been improperly called) have been sold in the different German states; but they were nothing more, especially as regards the later volumes, than notes taken from the lectures of this justly celebrated and very practical writer, and published surreptitiously.

The author has adopted a system of classification, which appears to be much better suited to practical investigation than any other hitherto published. It involves no pathological theory, and is founded upon no hypothetical datum.