

**A NEW SYNOPSIS OF
NOSOLOGY, FOUNDED ON THE
PRINCIPLES OF PATHOLOGICAL
ANATOMY, AND OF THE
NATURAL AFFINITIES OF DISEASES**

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A New Synopsis of Nosology, Founded on the Principles of Pathological Anatomy, and of the Natural Affinities of Diseases by G. Hume Weatherhead

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DISEASES.

BY
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TO

W. D. WEATHERHEAD, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

SITUATED as we are in the world, without other family relation than that in which we stand towards one another, I embrace with sincere pleasure the opportunity of dedicating the following Work to you, as a small tribute of my regard; and remain,

My dear Brother,

Ever affectionately yours,

G. HUME WEATHERHEAD.

*9, Upper Bedford Place,
Russell Square, 1st May, 1834.*

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE word Nosology, according to its derivation, simply means a discourse on diseases; but, by conventional acceptation, it is used to signify their systematic classification. From the earliest periods in the history of medicine, when diseases came to be treated of in books, irregular vestiges of this department of medical science are to be found; and hence we observe the father of our art, Hippocrates, arranging diseases in groups, founded on some real or supposed analogy between them, or treating of them collectively, as they affect particular organs or parts of the body. As a knowledge of the nature of diseases became more correct and extended, we find, in later successive writers, greater precision and method in their classification; but Nosology, as a distinct branch of medical science, takes its origin from a period comparatively modern. Plater, who wrote in the beginning of the seventeenth century, was the first to sketch the penumbra of what is now understood by a synoptical classification of diseases. In his work on the Practice of Medicine, published at Basle in 1602, this author succeeded in making a first step towards a systematic arrangement of diseases, especially those affecting the nerves of sense and motion.

But it was François Boissier de Sauvages who compiled the first professed Synopsis on the classification of diseases. This work appeared in 1731, merely as outlines, which he subsequently republished, after taking above thirty years to complete it, in 1762, under the title of *Nosologia Methodica*. This illustrious writer's arrangement comprehends ten classes — a subdivision which of itself shews its vagueness; yet our admiration and gratitude are not the less due to Sauvages for having been the pioneer in this arduous and difficult undertaking; and to evince how far he accomplished it, it is only necessary to remark, that he formed several entire classes and orders which have been adopted by every nosologist who has succeeded him.

The Synopsis of Linnæus and Vogel appeared almost immediately afterwards; the one at Upsal in 1763, the other at Gottingen in 1764, without either of these having made any manifest improvement in the classification. Linnæus even augmented the number of classes to eleven; and many of his genera are nothing more than symptoms, such as *anxietas*, *languor*, *lassitudo*, *stupor*, *pruritus*, *tussis*, *stertor*, *delirium*, &c. Vogel makes a similar number of classes, and also enumerates a variety of mere symptoms as diseases, such as *nausea*, *tenesmus*, *ructus*, &c.; but his definitions are to be admired for their descriptive terseness. Macbride, Sagar, and the illustrious Cullen, followed. Of the first of these writers as a nosologist, little need be remarked, since candour obliges us to say, that he has done nothing to advance pathological classification. Sagar, again, whose work appeared at Vienna in 1776,

although he makes so many as thirteen classes, shews throughout his work much admirable distinctness and method; and many of his definitions are models of lucid acumen of comprehension. Indeed, it may be observed of the general character of the several systems of nosology, up to the time of Cullen, that it was not so much in improving the classification of diseases, as in more accurately separating them from one another, and defining their distinctive symptoms, that any progress was made.

Of Cullen we scarcely know whether most to admire the beautiful simplicity and clearness of his method, or the philosophical comprehension of his genius. As Sydenham has so deservedly obtained the appellation of the English Hippocrates, so may we, with equal justice, bestow on this immortal ornament of our profession the title of the Scottish Father of Medicine. Cullen, with that precision of thought which so eminently distinguished him, reduced the number of classes to four; but his methodical arrangement is too generally known to make it requisite to particularise it. Various other Synopses of Nosology have been put forth by different eminent men in England, amongst whom Parr, Young, and Good, are the most noted. It is not my intention, neither would it afford me any satisfaction, to enter into an examination of the principles on which they are founded. It were hypocrisy to pretend an unqualified, or even modified, approbation of their several methods, seeing that I have adopted for myself, in this Synopsis, one so very opposite. I may merely observe, that of the three, the system of the last of these writers is the one that most outrages every