

**THE ANATOMY
AND PHYSIOLOGY
OF THE PLACENTA**

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The Anatomy and Physiology of the Placenta by John O'Reilly

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JOHN O'REILLY

**THE ANATOMY
AND PHYSIOLOGY
OF THE PLACENTA**

THE
ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY
OF THE
PLACENTA.

THE CONNECTION OF THE
NERVOUS CENTRES
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Animal and Organic Life.

BY JOHN O'REILLY, M. D.,

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AND FETTER HOSPITAL.



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1860.

TO
ROBERT ADAMS, M.D., A.M., M.R.I.A.,

PRESIDENT
OF THE
ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND,

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED,

As a Token of Respect and Esteem,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E .

No one is more fully sensible of the difficult task of unraveling the mysteries connected with the nervous system than I am. No person is more firmly impressed with the conviction that it requires a man of profundity of thought, depth of penetration, expansive intellect, and enlarged views, to illustrate and demonstrate the mode of action of the nervous system, than I am.

No person is more forcibly convinced of his incompetency to give a subject of such extraordinary importance ample justice, than I am.

What, therefore, has induced me to attempt writing on a subject, which, during a period of twenty years, whilst actively engaged in the practice of medicine and surgery, I never bestowed a thought on?

The reply is simply that, being accidentally called by the Section of Anatomy and Physiology of the Academy of Medicine to attend one of its meetings, with the view of forming a quorum, to enable that body to proceed with a discussion on the Anatomy

and Physiology of the Placenta, I complied with the request, and casually advanced views which I subsequently found necessary to vindicate, and which I am now anxious to place before the profession *in extenso*.

INTRODUCTION.

It should be of no consequence by whom the true solution of an abstruse question is found, provided it can be proved to be correct.

Every person who enters on an inquiry relative to a difficult subject, with a view to expound it clearly and satisfactorily, is looked upon with suspicion; his assertions regarded with doubt; and whatever he puts forward as fact is received with hesitation.

The high reputation of an author is generally a passport to the public that the subject he treats of is worthy of attention, and demands consideration.

Conclusions and opinions, arrived at by men after superficial reading and study, are not calculated, in many instances, to elevate the reputation of an author, as they cannot appreciate or comprehend the nature of the matter under discussion.

The opinions of the highest authorities on a scientific subject should not be received as authentic, without standing the ordeal of the most rigid scrutiny as to their truthfulness in all its bearings.

It is particularly requested that the reader of the following pages will negative or affirm every paragraph, after mature consideration, without waiting to read the entire chapter.

The great obstacle to the thorough understanding of the nervous system of animal and organic life, presents itself in the want of human intelligence of a sufficiently high standard to comprehend the agency of immaterialism in the operations of materiality.

The several organs of the body are constructed physically with the greatest precision as to their mechanism and component parts, so as to discharge efficiently the duties of the offices which they were destined to perform in the animal economy.

The eye cannot be surpassed in construction, as an optical instrument; the ear, as an acoustic apparatus; or the larynx, as a musical instrument.

It is to be observed, when the eye is injured, vision is either lost or impaired; that the same remark is true of hearing, when the ear is implicated; that the voice is lowered when the larynx suffers; and so, in like manner, when any part of the organic nervous system is treated with violence, the functions of life are deranged, or cease altogether.

The anatomical organization of a dead man is the very type of the living one. Certain characteristics, which are too well known to require enumeration, distinguish the living from the dead; as the former can be instantly assimilated to the latter, without any