

# **AN ESSAY ON THE SHAKING PALSY**

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An essay on the shaking palsy by James Parkinson

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**JAMES PARKINSON**

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ON THE  
SHAKING PALSY.

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BY  
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## PREFACE.

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THE advantages which have been derived from the caution with which hypothetical statements are admitted, are in no instance more obvious than in those sciences which more particularly belong to the healing art. It therefore is necessary, that some conciliatory explanation should be offered for the present publication: in which, it is acknowledged, that mere conjecture takes the place of experiment; and, that analogy is the substitute for anatomical examination, the only sure foundation for pathological knowledge.

When, however, the nature of the subject, and the circumstances under which it has been here taken up, are considered, it is

hoped that the offering of the following pages to the attention of the medical public, will not be severely censured. The disease, respecting which the present inquiry is made, is of a nature highly afflictive. Notwithstanding which, it has not yet obtained a place in the classification of nosologists; some have regarded its characteristic symptoms as distinct and different diseases, and others have given its name to diseases differing essentially from it; whilst the unhappy sufferer has considered it as an evil, from the domination of which he had no prospect of escape.

The disease is of long duration: to connect, therefore, the symptoms which occur in its later stages with those which mark its commencement, requires a continuance of observation of the same case, or at least a correct history of its symptoms, even for several years. Of both these advantages the writer has had the opportunities of avail-



ing himself; and has hence been led particularly to observe several other cases in which the disease existed in different stages of its progress. By these repeated observations, he hoped that he had been led to a probable conjecture as to the nature of the malady, and that analogy had suggested such means as might be productive of relief, and perhaps even of cure, if employed before the disease had been too long established. He therefore considered it to be a duty to submit his opinions to the examination of others, even in their present state of immaturity and imperfection.

To delay their publication did not, indeed, appear to be warrantable. The disease had escaped particular notice; and the task of ascertaining its nature and cause by anatomical investigation, did not seem likely to be taken up by those who, from their abilities and opportunities, were most likely to accomplish it. That these friends to huma-

nity and medical science, who have already unveiled to us many of the morbid processes by which health and life is abridged, might be excited to extend their researches to this malady, was much desired; and it was hoped, that this might be procured by the publication of these remarks.

Should the necessary information be thus obtained, the writer will repine at no censure which the precipitate publication of mere conjectural suggestions may incur; but shall think himself fully rewarded by having excited the attention of those, who may point out the most appropriate means of relieving a tedious and most distressing malady.

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