

**THE PHYSIOLOGY OR MECHANISM OF
BLUSHING; ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE INFLUENCE
OF MENTAL EMOTION ON THE CAPILLARY
CIRCULATION; WITH A GENERAL VIEW OF THE
SYMPATHIES, AND THE ORGANIC RELATIONS
OF THOSE STRUCTURES WITH WHICH THEY
SEEM TO BE CONNECTED**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649671250

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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THOMAS H. BURGESS

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BY

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AND OF THE SOCIÉTÉ MÉDICALE D'OBSERVATION DE PARIS.

Only cover the human face, and the curtain is instantly dropped over this mirror of
the soul; hence the people of all nations leave it bare.—*Bicollé.*

LONDON:
JOHN CHURCHILL, PRINCES STREET, SOHO.

1839.

1087.

LONDON : PRINTED BY JOHN SCOTT,
62 JOHN STREET, HOLLAND STREET, BLACKFRIARS ROAD.

P R E F A C E.

THERE is, perhaps, no subject more interesting either to the physiologist or general enquirer, than that which embraces a consideration of the involuntary acts of the mind upon the vital organs and their several functions. The various emotions and sensations excited by these acts, are, indeed, in themselves, sufficiently attractive as matters of contemplation; although, to the medical enquirer, probably less so, than the *physical changes* that are produced in different parts of the body by their agency. It is, therefore, with these changes that the author has principally occupied himself in the following pages.

Of all the alterations resulting from mental emotion, none are more surprising, or more worthy of attentive consideration, than those which take place in the Circulation of the Blood. The wonderful influence which the mind exerts on the movement of the vital fluid (arresting its progress or increasing its velocity according as the impressions made are of a depressing or exciting nature) offers a wide

and fruitful field of investigation. Impressed with this idea, the author has been induced to direct his attention particularly to the phenomenon of BLUSHING, which, from its intimate connexion with the *Sympathies* in general, will be found to afford more ample scope for physiological enquiry than might at first sight be imagined. The close analogy between blushing and inflammation is also another link in the chain of interest its investigation presents to the purely medical enquirer.

In those parts of the subject bearing especially on Anatomy and Physiology, the author has had occasion, in several places, to dissent from the opinions of different writers on the same subject, and has advanced other views which appear to him as more tenable; but he trusts he has always done this in a tone of proper respect. His chief aim throughout this little work has been to draw valid conclusions from well authenticated facts, and by this means to arrive at truths that may in time become of use to science.

3, North Crescent, Bedford Square,
February 1839.

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