

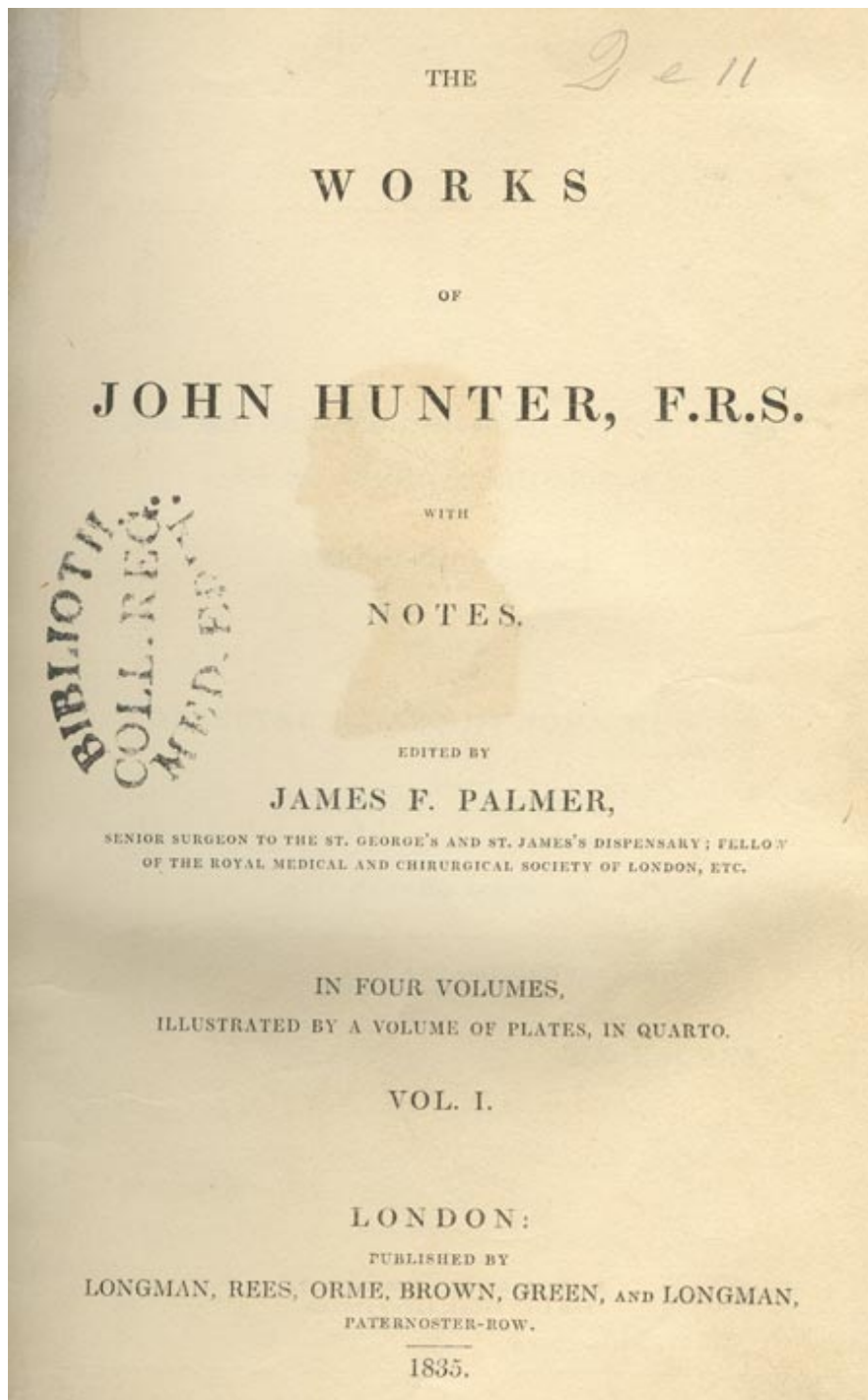
Records

[Title Page\(s\)](#) [Key Passage\(s\)](#) [JLL Article\(s\)](#) [Portrait\(s\)](#) [Context](#)

[Download key passages/title pages as a PDF](#)

[Hunter J \(1835\)](#). The works of John Hunter FRS, edited by James F Palmer, Vol 1. London: Longman et al., p 360.

Title pages



Key passages

Minds which are particularly irritable are most subject to such diseases, having the acting parts more under the control of the mind, and less under that of the will; also the involuntary powers are more under the influence of the state of mind, as the heart, &c. These diseases are called nervous, and more peculiarly belong to women, who being less acquainted with the real properties of natural things, are more apt to imagine preternatural ones; and their reasoning powers not being so strong, they indulge the actions of the mind more, and allow it to take possession of the body: for the mind can often prevent diseases of such a nature as are contrary to health, and depend on voluntary actions, of which take the following instance. A woman, aged forty-six, of a good-natured disposition, had been troubled for some years with a drawing of the neck to one side, by the contraction of one of the mastoid muscles: this it was always in her power to prevent, by contracting the opposite muscle, when she sufficiently recollected herself. The right muscle, the one affected, did not contract of itself, unless by some accident she of her own accord contracted it a little, after which it continued contracting till it produced its full effect. When her mind was agreeably engaged she seldom felt it, or when conversing with an intimate friend or reading; but fear and every other unpleasant state always produced it. If she expected to see any stranger before whom she was particularly anxious to hide her defect, she had it always more violently than usual. This circumstance of the mind's continuing action when it has once taken it up, is remarkable in hiccup, which is often produced by laughing; thus hiccuping, which is an involuntary action, is produced by laughing, which is a voluntary one. But as the state of the mind is thus capable of producing a disease, another state of it may effect a cure: so the hiccup may be cured by producing fear. There are other diseases which a state of the mind may cure, though they have not been brought on by it, as agues have been cured by charms which have been used with a thorough conviction of their being a sovereign remedy. I am apt to suppose that a spider's web, when taken for an ague, cures in the same way, at least in one case; for on giving it without the patient's knowledge, it had not the slightest effect; but by persuading the patient that it was a spider, the effect was produced, at least the disease did not return. Even tumours have yielded to the stroke of a dead man's hand.