

those of health, but the intimate *materies morbi* and the ordinary *methodus agendi*, we only now see "as through a glass darkly." It is therefore better to avoid all unknown explanations and strictly hold fast to the truth—nor on any account travel beyond its precinct, after the transient splendour of an apparent mental meteor, lest we be beguiled and lost in error's mazy way. Speaking of the production of dropsies, Dr T. remarks, dropsy "is an indication of a disturbed state of the circulation—such as permits a portion of the serum of the blood, or of the liquor sanguinis, &c., to transude through the parietes of the small blood vessels." Subsequently he explains the vascular derangement by observing, it "is a retarded return of the blood through the veins of the parts, &c., the blood accumulates in the capillaries, which are, to a certain extent, relieved by the transudation of the liquid portion." Now we would observe that these statements do not really shed any light upon the *real* cause of the disorder, were they merely intended to be significant of certain links in the chain of causation, the last perhaps that is commonly appreciable, and to imply, that of other agencies, unknown, they were but the effects, or associates, they might pass unchallenged; but if, as they are considered to be, in themselves competent to account for the occurrences to which they relate, we must be permitted to record our dissent from such an opinion. To accept as sufficient such a theory, is much the same as the faith of the Eastern sages who believe the earth rests on a tortoise, and are so satisfied as to leave unasked what supports the tortoise. Injustice to Dr. T., it must be said that, elsewhere than in the passages quoted, he informs the reader that the derangement may be created by different agencies, as for example poverty of the blood, pressure on the veins, heart disease, inflammation in the superimposed skin, &c. This is certainly progressing in the proper direction, but it is not right when stopped here to fall into generalizations. A careful perquisition of the entire subject of dropsies, particularly of a clinical kind, will declare that there are many phenomena in the supervention and progress of these complaints, which the above explanations, with all their extensions, fail to meet. Two or three occur to us at the present time, which may be briefly stated, as follows:—If dropsy be merely the result of an infiltration—mechanical as it is fashionable to say—of serum into serous cavities, or cellular tissue, or both; how is it that the fluid so extravasated, not only differs in its integrant composition from healthy blood-serum, but is also dissimilar to the serum of the blood procured from the patient immediately, or at the time, the subject of the disorder. If the dropsical fluid be a mere escape, at least it should be similar to the