

to take place being inexplicable, no rule, having a universal application, has ever been known to obtain. The belief that the elements of the food, as of vegetables and milk, become changed in their essential properties, before that bone, flesh and brain can be produced, has precluded the idea of tracing these elementary constituents; for to identify the carbon of milk in the blood or tissues, could not have been conceived to be possible, while the impression existed that the carbon lost its purely carbonaceous properties by digestion and assimilation. Not only medicine, but hygiene, came thus to be established also on a purely empirical foundation. The comparative usefulness of gluten and starch could not be perceived. The different purposes of albumen and fat were as little known as if these substances themselves were beyond our cognizance. Even at the present day, there is no stronger proof of the false empirical notions, with respect to diet, than is evidenced in the rules for using butcher meat, vegetables, alcoholic beverages, &c. Though these rules are various, and notwithstanding the progress which has been made in organic chemistry, it seems not to be known that beef has a specific use altogether distinct from vegetables, and serves a separate purpose in the animal economy. There are thus erroneous and indefinite rules for hygiene, as there are contradictory modes of practice in medicine,—inconsistencies that are altogether attributable to the notion, so generally prevalent, that, in the processes of digestion and assimilation, the elementary constituents of the food lose their original properties.

In considering the subject of identity, it would be improper to overlook the doctrines of ancient philosophers and modern thinkers, in relation to it. These doctrines will be recognized under the appellation of the atomic theory. So early as the fifth century before the Christian era, two philosophical schools or sects flourished in the Greek colonies of Ionia, in Asia Minor. They were distinguished chiefly by the notions, which they respectively held, concerning the unchangeableness of the primary elements, or, what they termed, the atoms of matter. One sect, being necessarily pantheistic in its views of creation, held the belief that the universe existed by virtue of a power within itself, which was forthforming and progressive; and consequently, as there was no motive power distinct from matter, that the power of motion and generation was possessed by each atom; the aggregate power of the whole being a unity, comprising the powers of the several parts. Each atom was therefore supposed to have a power within itself of generation and mutability,

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