

very tedious and difficult to remove. Hence it appears that the state of the menstrual function is not to be considered the cause of these affections or the ground of their development. Cases, no doubt, often occur where we find a patient labouring under what is termed Spinal Irritation, at the same time irregular in the uterine secretions; and the circumstance always occasions anxiety to herself and her friends, as they believe that on this much of her affection depends. But if we can place any reliance on observation, it is to be considered only as coincident, and not as connected with the development of the disease. We must in medicine, as in physical science, endeavour to trace every effect to its true and specific cause, in order to establish general principles. For we may rest assured that, however varied may be the phases which disease may assume, there is nothing anomalous in its character, but that it all depends on general laws for the development of its symptoms. And accordingly, in these different cases, we conceive that one general law operates in producing the affection.

It is further to be observed that these affections are not confined to females. They are also observed in men; at least symptoms perfectly similar, and yielding to the same mode of treatment are found to affect males; and it is very probable that they arise in a similar state of constitution. The patients, of both sexes, in whom these affections are most frequently observed, are those in whom there is an apparent want of tone and vigour in the constitution; where the functions of nutrition are languid, and there is indication of what is termed a strumous diathesis. Hence, attention has been directed to the state of the general health, and means employed to strengthen the system, and improve the digestive organs.

These complaints, we may also observe, have been considered of a hysterical character, and treated on that principle; and the various symptoms which they assume might have led to that conclusion, whilst pathology afforded nothing definite respecting their nature. But, by a more correct diagnosis, the spine has been pointed out as the seat of the affection. And perhaps it may be asked whether or not hysteria has its seat in the spinal cord, or is in some measure connected with the functions of that organ. At all events, since the subject of spinal irritation occupied the attention of the profession, the number of hysterical complaints has diminished, and there is little doubt, will be still further reduced as we obtain more correct views of the nature and treatment of disease.

But as the nature of these affections will be better understood from the perusal of the cases themselves, we shall describe a few that have come under our observation and treatment.

CASE I.—M. P., aged twelve years. This young lady has been for upwards of two years in a delicate state of health, and gradually lost flesh and strength. She is so weak that she is