

It will not appear astonishing to hear, after reading this extract, that Dr. Radcliffe maintains, as was just said, different opinions upon the subject of muscular contraction to those generally entertained. He opens the lock with a key of singular construction. The first part of the present volume, comprising 135 pages, is devoted to the physiology of muscular motion, and is principally intended to establish the following proposition:—

“Muscle contracts, not because it is stimulated to contract by nervous influence or electricity, or any other so-called stimulus of contraction, but because something has been withdrawn from the muscle which previously prevented the free action of molecular attraction.”

His purpose is rendered still more evident in the following statement. He undertakes to prove—

“That muscular contraction is not produced by the stimulation of any property of contractility belonging to muscle.”

And with this he also extends his remarks to several collateral topics. In handling this matter he gives a copious exposition of the experiments and deductions of Dr. Du Bois-Reymond, who is also amenable to the charge of similar dissent from the recognised opinions concerning muscular function.

The foregoing plainly exhibits that the characteristic phenomena of epilepsy will be interpreted differently by various observers according as the bias of their judgment inclines them to consider power or debility as the essential influence in action. Participating in the frequent applications made of the same fundamental principles to other diseased states, it is not to be expected opinion should be undivided as to its nature, or, in other words, as to its pathology. Until all minds can take the same view of the elements of vascular disturbance, there is no probability for assuming they will agree upon those referring to the more occult disorders of the nervous system. Until pathologists agree in deciding whether inflammation be power or debility, the like terms will be promiscuously applied to the solution of the mystery of epilepsy. And a sufficient reason for our saying so is, that both inflammation and epilepsy stand as representatives of disease generally; for concerning the latter, there prevails the same uncertainty as to whether it (disease) be power or debility, and, necessarily, the diversity of belief must pervade the example that is for the time the reflection, of the features of disease in general, in the interruption of health, departure from the normal state, invasion of morbid phenomena, and progress in diseased changes.

It is pleasant now to turn from this glorious uncertainty in Pathology to treatment—the next object of the book under review. Here experi-