

fix the attention of keen and accurate inquirers.

The clear view of the organic system of animal bodies, presented by the knowledge of the circulation of the blood, led not only to a deeper acquaintance with the internal structure, but also, to the application of *mechanical* philosophy, in explaining the phenomena of animal life. This became a fashionable mode of reasoning until a very late period. But it has been found very *defective* in explaining the animal economy; and, although it is still partially in use, and may still continue to be used, it would be easy to show, that its application must be very limited and partial. Still, however, down till this period, the physician, whether Galenist or Chemist, was so accustomed to consider the state and condition of the fluids, both as the cause of disease and as the foundation for explaining the operation of medicine in its cure, that they were both termed the *humoral pathology*.

It now soon appeared that chemistry promised a much better explanation of the system, than the Galenic or Aristotelian philosophy had done. These were, therefore, almost entirely laid aside, and chemical reasoning every where prevailed. Lord Bacon, with his usual sagacity, had early discovered that chemistry promised a great number of facts; and he therefore gave it credit, and covered it with the shadow of his *mighty name*.

The Corpuscular philosophy, restored by Gassendi, readily united with the reasonings of the Chemists; and the philosophy of Des Cartes, with great facility, combined and commingled with both. From all these combinations and affinities, an Humoral but chiefly a Chemical pathology prevailed down to the end of the last century. The history of the human mind is to be traced in the language, the science, the arts, and the writings of the world. The study is curious, but it is of high and holy estimation.

About the middle of the seventeenth century arose the great SYDENHAM; the first of the moderns, the father of medical science, in its present robes of modern fashion. His writings will be esteemed a *standard*, says Dr. Cullen,

as long as they shall be known, or shall endure. He did not entangle himself in the thorny paths which led to the mysteries of animal life; his pathology was simple and comprehensive. The *oppressed* and *exhausted* state of the system, comprised his rationale of disease and mode of cure. The simplicity of his views seems to have laid the foundation for the *theories* of Rush and Brown. The morbid excitement of the first, and the *direct* and *indirect* debility of the latter, with the unity of disease, and classes of *sthenic* and *asthenic* diathesis, and mode of cure, appear to have their origin in the principles of Sydenham.

To add to the science of medicine, said Sydenham, two facts must be kept in view: 1st, to give a full and complete description or history of disease; and, 2d, to discover a fixed and perfect remedy, or mode of cure. And to these high objects did Dr. Sydenham dedicate the labors of his long and useful life; preferring their great importance, to the fruitless and unprofitable speculations, on the *principle of life*. By neglecting these desiderata, he observes, the *Materia Medica* has been swelled to an unreasonable size, filled with great uncertainty! To these obvious and valuable facts, the doctor would add the knowledge of specifics; and in consequence has been called a quack. But his fame stands too high and bright, to be tainted by the breath of scandal! He says the only specific we have, is the Jesuit bark. Calomel and sarsparilla are not specifics; unless it can be shown that the one does not produce salivation, and the other perspiration. He laments that the medical virtues of plants are so little known, though the most valuable part of the *materia medica*.

Organized substances are the food of animals, and as medicinal, must be more congenial to their natures, than the brute mass of inanimated matter. Dr. Ray observes, we are sprung from the earth, we feed upon her bounty, draw our nourishment from her breast.

It must be confessed, says Dr. Sydenham, that although mineral medicines meet the indications of disease, they are not to be relied on as specifics, with the same entire confidence,