

complaint, its seat being in a part upon which the whole weight of the trunk continually preponderates, except when the body is in an horizontal posture. Thus again, for the reason just specified, an abscess may form in the cellular substance, between the peritoneum and psoas muscle, even before the existence of the diseased spine ; for it often forms itself without being the consequence of this disorder. Thus again, if one of a scrofulous diathesis, expose his legs to a great fatigue or excessive cold, he may have the white-swelling, or inflammation of the whole joint, &c.

Among other causes of scrofula, writers, very generally, rank debility as its first and most essential, or, otherwise, as its *specific* cause. An essential, like the proximate cause, is that without which the disease could not exist ; and a specific cause is such as, under proper circumstances, infallibly produces its specific effect and appropriate disease ; but scrofula sometimes, though rarely, occurs without evidence of debility, and debility is well known to exist, in the most extreme degree, and under all circumstances, without even the appearance of the least sign of scrofula. Debility, therefore, cannot be regarded either as the essential or specific cause of scrofula.

As scrofula depends on dyspepsia, debility, it is true, commonly attends the complaint more or less throughout its course ; but, it cannot be admitted as the essential, nor, indeed, as any cause, but merely as a concomitant of the disease ; for, although debility, like predisposition and convalescence, varies from the state of perfect health, yet, I believe that, in strict medical language, one cannot, with propriety, consider it either as a disease, or as the cause of any disease whatever. Debility like predisposition or morbid diathesis, is merely a peculiar state or condition, under which the system receives, more readily and more effectually the impression of morbid causes ; this, I could prove, were