

the air machine with several tubes, is the various stimuli, acting on the body, and the flame is the phenomenon of life.

Thus the curious and comprehensive system of Dr. Brown, is summed up briefly in this similitude; to which is added this further illustration: As life is a forced state, according to the doctor, it is said, where one tube of the machine pours in pure air; this signifies the highest degree of stimulants; when common atmospheric air, the common stimulants of food, drink, &c.; and when impure air, it indicates the sedative powers, as poisons, putrefactions, marsh miasmata, foul air, stagnant water, &c. From these few examples, it will be easy to comprehend Brown's Theory. The more a spark is blown, the brighter it burns, and the sooner it is spent. This sage saying exemplifies what is remarked by Dr. Brown, when he affirms that the stimulating powers support life, and at the same time consume it, because they waste the excitability; therefore, the necessity of sleep, when all the exciting powers are withdrawn, to give the living principle time to accumulate its excitability.

In a very few years, notwithstanding the opposition made to Brown's theory, it spread with rapidity over England, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, and America. Even those who rejected his doctrine, were nevertheless influenced and benefitted by his practice. It has been so with Dr. Thomson. The vapor bath was a poor attempt to devise a substitute for his method of steaming.

When Lavoisier first announced his system, the Chemists who were the most scandalized by it, found themselves obliged to reverse their whole congeries of facts and deductions. The immediate consequence was, an entire change in their opinions. They were forced to shift their foundations; and though they disdained to go over to Lavoisier, they could no longer adhere to Stahl. They were obliged to abandon half their errors, and no doubt a thorough illustration in medicine will be forced upon the faculty, by the curious discoveries of these latter years.

## DR. RUSH'S THEORY.

With Brown, he affirmed, 1st. *Life* to be a forced state.

2nd. *Life*, as applied to the human body, included *motion, heat, sensation and thought*; these four, when united, compose perfect life.

3rd. Every part of the human body, nails and hair excepted, is endowed with sensibility and excitability. *Sensibility* means, the power of having sensation excited by the action of impressions; *excitability*, the power of having motion excited by means of impressions.

4th. The human body is so formed, that if impressions be made upon it, in its healthy state, in one part, it will excite sensation, or motion, or both, in every other part; hence, the body is a unit; ergo, disserve a unit.

5th. *Life* is the effect of stimuli acting on the *excitability* and *sensibility*, which are extended in different degrees over every part of the body.

Dr. Rush agrees with Dr. Brown, that life is a forced state, and the effect of stimuli. He divides these the same as Brown, into external and internal. But for the matter or principle of life itself, he adds *sensibility* to Brown's excitability. He will not admit with Brown, that debility is disease, but only a predisposing cause of disease.

Disease consists in a morbid excitement, and the cure of diseases consists in restoring the equal diffusion over the whole body. He blames Cullen for inducing his students by his nosology, to prescribe for the names of diseases instead of their proximate causes; and Brown, he affirms to be equally faulty, for reducing them nearly to one class, and accommodating his prescriptions to the reverse states of the body, or to that which constitutes their proximate cause.

Air, by exciting respiration, gave the first impulse of life. When man was formed, God breathed into him the breath of life, that is, says the doctor, atmospheric air; dilating his nostrils, inflating his lungs, and thus excited in him the whole phenomena of animal, intellectual and spiritual life. And hence, life is the effect of stimuli acting on an organized body.