

ful, in the putrid and gangrenous sore throat, in rheumatism, inflammation of the joints and all chronic rheumatism, and the inflammation which attacks the brain after typhus fevers; dyspepsia, convulsions, and the diseases of children. All these, yielding to the stimulating medicine, he concluded they were asthenic. For seven years he was able to repel the fits of the gout by this mode of practice.

Led by the hand of nature, the doctor says, he walked round the whole circle of asthenic diseases, and found that they were all cured by the same remedy, stimulants.

With regard to the sthenic diseases, the cause and cure of which he says, nobody understood, all their symptoms were mistaken, and the practice wrong. I will, once for all, explain these terms of the Brunonian system.

Sthenic diathesis; diseased habit of body, occasioned by excess of stimuli, called indirect debility; oppressed state of the system.

Asthenic diathesis; diseased habit of body, occasioned by a deficiency of stimuli, called direct debility; exhausted state of the system.

The former was to be reduced by depletion; the latter by repletion. The Egyptians, in the corn country, purged and vomited themselves every month, three days in succession, notwithstanding they were the healthiest people in the world.

Dr. Brown reduced all general or universal diseases to these two forms, *sthenic* and *asthenic*; enlarged his plan, accounted for the symptoms and reduced the whole to a certain principle. An universal disease, he says, proceeds from an affection of the principle of life; but a local disease from a local injury. These three states, *health*, *disease*, and *predisposition*, constituted the life, or living state of animals. From thus ascribing all diseases to *excess* or *deficiency*, he directed his remedies to the reverse states of the body, and showed that the noxious powers which excited either, were the remedies of the other. He laid down the same doctrine in regard to plants; and finally demanded, whether the medical art, hitherto *conjectural* *incoherent*, and in the great body of its doctrines false, was not at least reduced to a science of demonstration, which might be called

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE? A question which has been answered in the affirmative, says his biographer, by every one who has been at due pains to understand the doctrine.

BROWN'S THEORY.

1st. To every animate being is allotted a certain portion of the principle on which the phenomena of life depend. This principle is denominated *excitability*.

2d. The exciting powers are the external and internal stimuli. The former are heat, food, wine, poisons, contagions; the latter, the functions of the body itself, contractibility, thought, emotion and passion.

3d. Excitement is the *effect* produced by the action of the exciting powers on *excitability*.

4th. Life is a *forced* state; if the exciting powers are withdrawn, death ensues, as certainly as if the excitability was gone.

5th. By too great excitement, weakness is produced, because the excitability becomes defective. This is *indirect debility*. When the exciting powers are withheld, weakness is also induced, and this is *direct debility*. Here the excitability is in excess. *Ergo*, when the excitability is *defective*, it produces *indirect* debility; but when the excitability is in *excess* it then produces *direct* debility.

6th. Every power that acts on the living frame is a stimulant.

7th. Excitability is seated in the medullary portion of the nerves, and in the muscles.

Dr. Christie has illustrated this theory of Dr. Brown, by a familiar similitude. Suppose a fire to be made up in a grate filled with fuel, not very combustible, and a machine placed before it, containing several tubes pouring fresh air upon it. Suppose another pipe, fixed at the back of the grate, through which a constant supply of fresh fuel was poured into it, to supply the waste occasioned by the flame.

The grate is the human frame; the fuel in it, the matter or principle of life; the excitability of Dr. Brown and the *sensorial power* of Dr. Darwin. The pipe behind the grate pouring in fuel, is the power of the living system to regenerate itself, or re-produce excitability;