
CHAP. XXII.**OF DILUENTS.**

DILUENTS have been defined, Substances which increase the fluidity of the blood, by augmenting the proportion of fluid in it. Watery liquors, it is obvious, will have this operation to a certain extent, and, strictly speaking, water can be regarded as the only proper diluent. But different mild substances are added to it to render it pleasant, and frequently to communicate to it a demulcent quality, diluents and demulcents being generally employed to answer the same indications.

Diluents are prescribed principally in acute inflammatory diseases, with the views of quenching thirst, and diminishing the stimulating quality of the blood. They are employed too to favour the operation of sweating, being given tepid; and sometimes to promote the action of diuretics, especially of those which are saline. And there are some chronic diseases in which diluents appear advantageous. Some mineral waters, celebrated for their efficacy, are found to be nothing but water uncommonly pure, such as the Malvern Water; and the advantage derived from these in scrofulous affections is probably to be attributed to mere dilution.