

## INTRODUCTION.

**MEDICAL** Science, considered as relating to the treatment of disease, may be presented under two points of view. Under one, the symptoms of diseases are described, their causes are investigated, the indications are delivered by which their cure is to be attempted, and the remedies are enumerated by which these indications are to be fulfilled. When this method is followed, a previous knowledge is supposed of the natural history, properties, and medicinal powers of the substances employed as remedies; and they are no farther subjects of attention, than to point out their applications to particular cases, and the cautions which, from peculiarity of circumstances, require to be attended to in their administration.

But the subject may also be presented under another aspect. The symptoms of diseases, their causes, and indications of cure, may be supposed to be known, and the remedies themselves become principally the objects of study,—their natural characters, their sensible qualities, their effects on the living system, the theory of their action, and their applications to the treatment of morbid affections, forming so many subjects of description or investigation. This constitutes the department of *MATERIA MEDICA*,—understood in the most extensive signification of the term.

The medicinal powers of natural bodies are connected with their chemical constitution; they frequently reside, not in the entire matter composing them, but in principles capable

of being extracted and obtained in an insulated state, and which in this state can often be employed with peculiar advantages. When given in combination too, these substances are liable sometimes to act on each other, and from the changes arising from these mutual actions, to suffer alterations in their properties. Hence arises the necessity of a strict attention to their chemical composition; and a description of their constituent principles, and of their chemical relations, so far at least as these influence their actions as remedies, belongs to this department of Medicine. We are also often able, by chemical combinations, to modify the powers of these substances, to give them more activity, and even by the production of new compounds, to obtain remedies which nature does not afford. These are the leading objects of PHARMACY, the principal processes of which are chemical, and which is evidently subordinate to *Materia Medica*.

Regarding all these objects of inquiry as belonging to one department of Medicine, this department naturally falls under three divisions. Under the first may be delivered those principles which are common to *Materia Medica* and Pharmacy, those which embrace the chemical relations of bodies, and the changes to which they are liable, so far as is connected with their medicinal operations,—forming what may be named Pharmaceutic Chemistry. Under the second is placed the history of the substances employed as remedies, constituting what is regarded as *Materia Medica* in the more limited sense frequently attached to the term. And under the third may be considered the processes to which these substances are subjected, with the view of preparing them for administration, forming what is more strictly denominated Pharmacy. On these divisions is founded the arrangement of this Work.