

## CHAPTER III.

DISCOVERY OF THE MOTION OF THE CHYLE, AND CONSEQUENT  
SPECULATIONS.*Sect. 1.—The Discovery of the Motion of the Chyle.*

IT may have been observed in the previous course of this History of the Sciences, that the discoveries in each science have a peculiar physiognomy: something of a common type may be traced in the progress of each of the theories belonging to the same department of knowledge. We may notice something of this common form in the various branches of physiological speculation. In most, or all of them, we have, as we have noticed the case to be with respect to the circulation of the blood, clear and certain discoveries of mechanical and chemical processes, succeeded by speculations far more obscure, doubtful, and vague, respecting the relation of these changes to the laws of life. This feature in the history of physiology may be further instanced, (it shall be done very briefly), in one or two other cases. And we may observe, that the lesson which we are to collect from this narrative, is by no means that we are to confine ourselves to the positive discovery, and reject all the less clear and certain speculations. To do this, would be to lose most of the chances of ulterior progress; for though it may be, that our conceptions of the nature of organic life are not yet sufficiently precise and steady to become the guides to positive inductive truths, still the only way in which these peculiar physiological ideas can be made more distinct and precise, and thus brought more nearly into a scientific form, is by this struggle with our ignorance or imperfect knowledge. This is the lesson we have learnt from the history of physical astronomy and other sciences. We must strive to refer facts which are known and understood, to higher principles, of which we cannot doubt the existence, and of which, in some degree, we can see the place; however dim and shadowy may be the glimpses we have hitherto been able to obtain of their forms. We may often fail in such attempts, but without the attempt we can never succeed.