

CHAPTER III

OUR LIFE

Development of Physiology in Antiquity and the Middle Ages : Galen—Experiment and Vivisection—Discovery of the Circulation of the Blood by Harvey—Vitalism : Haller—Teleological and Vitalistic Conception of Life—Mechanical and Monistic View of the Physiological Processes—Comparative Physiology in the Nineteenth Century : Johannes Müller—Cellular Physiology : Max Verworn—Cellular Pathology : Virchow—Mammal Physiology—Similarity of all Vital Activity in Man and the Ape

IT is only in the nineteenth century that our knowledge of human life has attained the dignity of a genuine, independent science ; during the course of the century it has developed into one of the highest, most interesting, and most important branches of knowledge. This “ science of the vital functions,” physiology, had, it is true, been regarded at a much earlier date as a desirable, if not a necessary, condition of success in medical treatment, and had been constantly associated with anatomy, the science of the structure of the body. But it was only much later, and much more slowly, than the latter that it could be thoroughly studied, as it had to contend with much more serious difficulties.

The idea of life, as the opposite of death, naturally became the subject of speculation at a very early age. In the living man, just as in other living animals, there