

Other arguments in favour of his system he draws from the temporary effects produced by cerebral inflammation on the state of the mental powers: in the case, for instance, of idiots, who during the inflammatory action have manifested a considerable degree of understanding; but after the cessation of that action have relapsed into their former state of fatuity.

It would seem, in the instances here adduced by Dr. Gall, that the mental faculties which had been previously in a state of fatuity, are rendered for the time rational, in consequence of a degree of excitement which in individuals not labouring under fatuity would have probably produced delirium: and, as a rational state of the faculties may be considered, to use a mathematical expression, as a mean proportional to fatuity and delirium, it might be expected that the same cause which would raise a rational state of the faculties to delirium, would raise an idiotic only to a natural state: as, in a similar manner, wine is observed to modify the characters of individuals of different temperaments, by elevating them for the moment:

“ It keeps the unhappy from sinking,

“ And makes e'en the valiant more brave.”

It would occupy too much time to enter into the detail of this interesting part of Dr. Gall's system: nor was more originally intended than to introduce the subject to the consideration of