

The operations of the stomach, viewed as a whole, may be stated as follows:—

1. The stomach has the power of dissolving alimentary substances, or, at least of bringing them to a semifluid state. This operation seems to be altogether chemical; and is probably effected by *reducing* the properties of alimentary substances.

2. The stomach has, within certain limits, the power of changing into one another, the simple alimentary principles, which have been described in the last chapter. Unless the stomach possessed such a power; that uniformity in the composition of the chyle, which we may imagine to be indispensable to the existence of every animal, could not be preserved. This part of the operations of the stomach, appears, like the reducing process, to be chemical; but not so easy of accomplishment: it may be termed the *converting* operation of the stomach.

3. The stomach must have, within certain limits, the power of *organizing* and *vitalizing* the different alimentary substances; so as to render them fit for being brought into more intimate union with a living body, than the crude aliments can be supposed to be. It is impossible to imagine, that this organizing agency of the stomach can be chemical. This agency is *vital*, and its nature is completely unknown.