

family are frequently affected, often at about the same age, by the same peculiar disease, not known to have previously occurred in the family. He specifies the occurrence of diabetes in three brothers under ten years old; he also remarks that children of the same family often exhibit, in common infantile diseases, the same peculiar symptoms. My father mentioned to me the case of four brothers who died between the ages of sixty and seventy, in the same highly peculiar comatose state. An instance has already been given of supernumerary digits appearing in four children out of six in a previously unaffected family. Dr. Devay states<sup>35</sup> that two brothers married two sisters, their first-cousins, none of the four nor any relation being an albino; but the seven children produced from this double marriage were all perfect albinos. Some of these cases, as Mr. Sedgwick<sup>36</sup> has shown, are probably the result of reversion to a remote ancestor, of whom no record had been preserved; and all these cases are so far directly connected with inheritance that no doubt the children inherited a similar constitution from their parents, and, from being exposed to nearly similar conditions of life, it is not surprising that they should be affected in the same manner and at the same period of life.

Most of the facts hitherto given have served to illustrate the force of inheritance, but we must now consider cases grouped as well as the subject allows into classes, showing how feeble, capricious, or deficient the power of inheritance sometimes is. When a new peculiarity first appears, we can never predict whether it will be inherited. If both parents from their birth present the same peculiarity, the probability is strong that it will be transmitted to at least some of their offspring. We have seen that variegation is transmitted much more feebly by seed, taken from a branch which had become variegated through bud-variation, than from plants which were variegated as seedlings. With most plants the power of transmission notoriously depends on some innate

<sup>35</sup> 'Du Danger des Mariages Consanguins,' 2nd edit., 1862, p. 103.

<sup>36</sup> 'British and Foreign Medico-

Chirurg. Review, July, 1833, pp 183, 189.