

The intimate nature of the *organic agent* or *agents*, or by whatever other name we may choose to designate the peculiar energies which exist in plants and in animals, and by which they are distinguished from inanimate matter; is now, and probably will ever remain, altogether unknown to us. But though we be thus ignorant of what these agents are; we can not only comprehend with tolerable certainty, what they *are not*; but we can also in some degree ascertain, what they are capable or incapable of effecting. As it is of the utmost consequence to obtain just views on these points, we shall consider them somewhat in detail.

When we were treating of inorganic elements and agencies, and of the laws which they appear mutually to obey, we found, that though their nature be obscure, and the investigation of them very difficult; we were nevertheless enabled to adduce some, not altogether unplausible, conjectures on the modes, in which the elements combine to form regular crystals and the other conditions of inanimate matter. Now with this insight into the nature of inorganic operations, and with all the additional knowledge of every kind, we can command, let us attentively survey the most simple plant or animal; let us observe the actions, the changes, the modifications of form and properties it continually exhibits; and then let us seriously ask ourselves,