

mechanical devices which a physician with a clear mental vision did not require: moreover, the patient would thereby be degraded and treated as a machine. Feeling of the pulse was the most direct method of ascertaining the reactive power of the vital forces, and was delicately practised as the most important process. Elderly practitioners considered counting with a second-watch as hardly good taste: taking the temperature was not thought of. As to the eye-mirror, a highly celebrated surgical colleague told me he would never use the instrument, it being dangerous to throw brilliant light into suffering eyes: another declared the mirror might do well for oculists with poor sight; he himself possessed very good eyes and did not need it. . . . A celebrated professor of physiology had an argument with his colleague in physics regarding the images in the eye. The professor of physics invited him of physiology to come and see the experiment. This was indignantly refused: a physiologist should have nothing to do with experiments, which might do well enough for a physicist."

The first great attack upon the organic system of forces, upon the citadel of life, was made by chemistry, and was led by Lavoisier and the great school of chemists which continued his work. It consisted in the application of the theory of combustion, in which oxygen played such an important part, to the processes of respiration,

14.
Attack from
the side of
chemistry.

of water, cold and warm, as a remedy in fever and other diseases,' London, 1797, "contains observations on the variations of the body-temperature. . . . But these attempts had little success. Not till the middle of the nineteenth

century was the importance of medical thermometry recognised, first through the classical work of von Bärensprung (1851), then through that of Traube, but mainly through Wunderlich" (ibid., p. 930).