

**Lectures on population, marriage and divorce : comprising an account of the causes and treatment of impotence and sterility, of the morbid and curative effects of marriage, and on the diseases produced by onanism / by Michael Ryan.**

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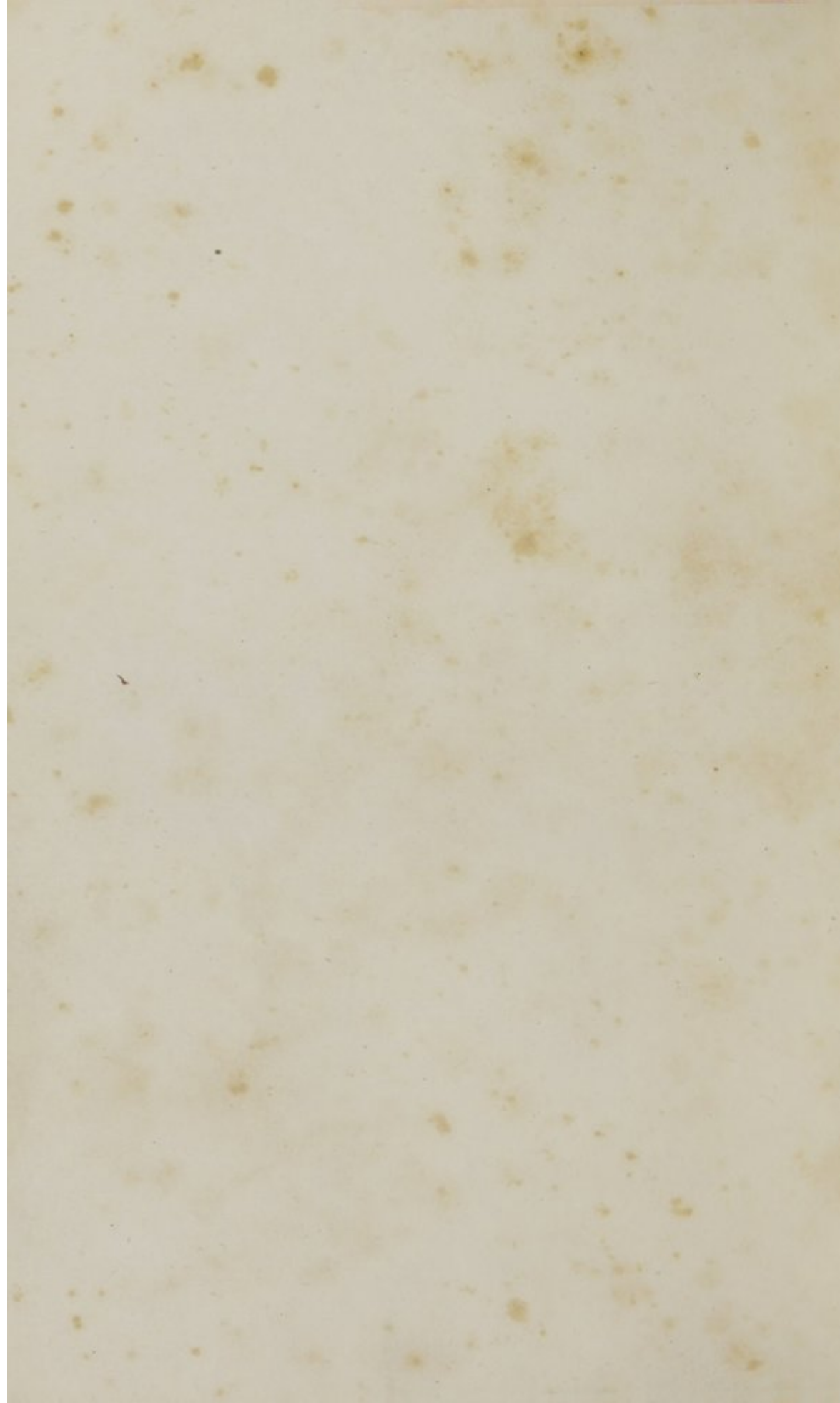
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LECTURES  
ON  
POPULATION, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE;  
COMPRISING  
AN ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES AND TREATMENT  
OF  
IMPOTENCE AND STERILITY,  
OF THE  
MORBID AND CURATIVE EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE,  
AND ON THE  
DISEASES PRODUCED BY ONANISM.

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LECTURES  
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MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE,  
& c. & c.

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POPULATION, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AS QUESTIONS OF STATE MEDICINE;  
CAUSES AND TREATMENT OF IMPOTENCE AND STERILITY; CURATIVE  
AND MORBID EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE.

GENTLEMEN:

The subjects we have next to consider have been too long neglected in this country, and almost consigned to the nefarious empiric; but I see no reason why we should not imitate our contemporaries in vicinal countries, and discuss them in a statistical and medical point of view. They are subjects of intense interest to every class of society, as you will perceive by the subsequent observations:

There are many bodily imperfections which are not sufficient to deprive married persons of mutual succour. The principal end of conjugal union is the establishment of a contract, by which the parties promise the exchange of mutual succour; and many of the ordinary infirmities are not a sufficient

motive to prevent consolation being given by those affected. Marriage is defined a civil and religious contract between male and female, by which they engage to live together in mutual love and friendship for the purpose of procreation. Some diseases are aggravated by marriage, as inveterate scrofula, epilepsy, confirmed phthisis, caries of the vertebræ, aneurism of the heart and large vessels; and as some of these and other diseases may be communicated to the offspring, they are considered by many as impediments to matrimonial union. Again, rachitis is often transmitted to infants; and this rachitic predisposition in the female, predisposes her to spinal and pelvic deformity, and it too often happens in such cases, that the very moment she hopes to be a mother, she is consigned to the tomb. Fodéré says, marriage should be interdicted when the sacro-pubic diameter of the brim of the pelvis is less than four inches; Orfila, when it is less than three inches; but defects of the outlet or perineal strait are as strong objections. Mania, and other forms of mental imbecility, are impediments to the marriage contract. It is necessary for this compact that there should be capacity to contract, and the consent of both parties. The various requisites for conjugal union are seldom duly considered by society; in fact, few persons trouble themselves about



them. The age, constitution, or health of the parties, is scarcely ever considered, though highly important. All physiologists agree that early or premature procreation is objectionable on many accounts, from the imperfect development of the parties, the smallness of the pelvis, which exposes the woman to protracted suffering during parturition, and too often to loss of life. It is universally known to all practical obstetricians, that females who become mothers at an early age purchase the honour of maternity at a very dear rate. Such persons are liable to numerous disorders during gestation, the pelvis is unable to support the gravid uterus, it is too small for the passage of the infant, consequently parturition will be laborious and protracted, and finally must be completed by artificial means; while the degree of pressure produced by this process on the important organs of the pelvis, causes great suffering and danger to the woman, and may be followed by deplorable disease, or death itself. It is also generally admitted by the most eminent writers, that the present mode of female education is highly injurious to health, predisposes to spinal curvature, and consequently to pelvic deformity, thereby rendering procreation highly dangerous to the other sex. Writers on spinal diseases have very fully illustrated this position.



Again, a great obstacle is opposed to the natural development of females, by the custom of tight lacing, the functions of the thoracic and abdominal viscera are impeded, the development of the breasts and nipples is prevented, these parts are considerably absorbed from pressure, the lactiferous ducts are almost obliterated; the nipple is undeveloped, and therefore lactation is impeded, and the natural food of the offspring greatly diminished. Duges, and other foreign writers, allude to unnatural excitement of the generative organs, and contend that masturbation is the cause of rickets, and of various chronic and incurable diseases. In these countries this vice is forgotten, indeed no practitioner can allude to it. In the male sex, it is productive of the worst consequences, and often causes impotence and sterility. The female is unfit for the purpose of procreation until after the twelfth or fourteenth year, or until menstruation is established; for at an earlier age the sexual organs are undeveloped, there is no venereal desire, and sexual intercourse is painful. Hence the cruelty and barbarity of violating female children of tender age, which have been described in the section on *Violation of Women*, in my work on Midwifery.

The male is also incapable of performing his part in the mysterious process of procreation until after

puberty, and according to the law of this country before the fourteenth year. He is not qualified to enter into matrimonial engagement until the completion of the twenty-first year.

There is no subject which distresses married persons so much as want of family, or leads to so much domestic feud and unhappiness, and finally to the nullification of marriage. It is necessary for the medical practitioner to be fully informed on all the causes which disqualify both sexes for the object of procreation. All disqualifications for matrimonial union may be divided into two classes: 1. those caused by defect of mental power; 2. those caused by defect of sexual organization. The disqualifications are therefore moral and physical, and are expressed by the terms *impotence* and *sterility*. These terms are often used synonymously, though widely different. *Impotence* consists in the incapacity for copulation, or in the impossibility of exercising the venereal act; *sterility* consists in the aptitude of the organs for procreation, without the power of reproduction. Thus a person may be impotent, but not sterile; and *vice versâ*. Some writers apply the term *impotence* to the male and *sterility* to the female; but such a distinction is arbitrary and unscientific: the female may be impotent from malformation, and the male sterile from



excessive venery, self-pollution, and ablation of the testicles. We may observe here, that sterility does not afford a just plea for the nullity of marriage. We have now to consider the manifest causes of impotence in both sexes, physical and moral.

*Physical, manifest, natural or accidental impotence of the male.*—The causes of manifest impotence of the male, are absence of the penis or testicles. There must be total loss of the penis, as the slightest penetration into the vagina is sufficient for procreation. (Blundell, Richerand, Sedillot, Manuel de Med. Legale, 1830, and others.)—The absence of the testicles from the scrotum is no proof of their non-existence in the abdomen; unless the penis be small, the voice puerile, the beard absent, the form delicate, and the whole physical and moral constitution feminine. It is well known that the testicles may not descend into the scrotum, and be fully developed in the abdomen, and perform their functions perfectly, and according to some writers, much better than in the natural situation. The destruction of one testicle by castration or disease, is no impediment to procreation. (Astley Cooper, Marc. Dict. des Sc. Med.)—When both testicles are diseased, their secretion is injured or destroyed, and sterility is the consequence. Frequent seminal emissions, or the sudden secretion of semen, will



be a bar to reproduction. The secreting power may be very much increased or diminished. The more fluid parts of the spermatic secretion must be absorbed, or it must be retained some time to fit it for procreation. Both testicles may be removed by castration; yet procreation be effected, as the vesiculæ seminales may contain a sufficient quantity of semen for one or two prolific emissions, after which the person will be sterile, but not impotent. M. Boyer was consulted by a man whose testicles were removed in consequence of sarcocoele. He saw his wife, and she became pregnant. He feared he was not the father; but M. Boyer assured him he might be, and if so, this would be his last infant. (Sedillot, Manuel de Med. Leg. *ut supra*.) But such persons, and also eunuchs, have erection and emission, which consists of the prostatic fluid, the mucus of the seminal vesicles and urethra. (Sir Astley Cooper on the Testis, 1830.)

The ureters may open above the pubes in monsters (Duncan and others,) and the whole genitals are deformed. Mahon, and many other jurists, contended that individuals were impotent who were affected with hypospadias; that is, when the urethra opens through any part of that canal from its orifice to the scrotum. If the opening is so placed that it may enter the vagina, impregnation will follow.

Frank relates a case in point. He knew a father so affected transmit it to his son, and even to three generations. Another individual had three sons. (Bull. de la Faculté de Medicine, 1810.) Morgagni, Petit-Radel, Sabatier, who was hypospasdiac; Gauthier and Richerand have observed analogous facts; (Dict. de Sc. Med. art. *Hypospasdias*;) and Blundell.

Sometimes the urethra opens along the dorsum penis; this constitutes epispasdias. It is evident that the reasoning employed in the preceding case is applicable to this. It may end in a cul-de-sac. (Goupil, Cloquet, &c.)

Dimensions of the penis, extraordinary thickness and length, are considered by some writers as causes of impotence. Fodéré is of opinion that the respective organs may be so disproportionate; as never to be adapted to each other; and the physical inconveniences are such as to expose the female to great injury and danger to her health. It must be admitted, however, that thickness of the penis, which excites great pain in some women, procures voluptuous sensations in others; and that the vagina is capable of great dilatation, which may be effected by gentle and gradual efforts, and be brought to a state capable of receiving the virile member. Though extreme length of the penis



may produce contusion of the os and cervix uteri, it cannot be deemed a just cause of impotence, because, by certain precautions, this danger may be avoided, unless there is great difference between the age of parties. Diminutiveness or shortness of the penis is no proof of impotence, for the reasons already stated. Obliquity, tortuosity, or bifurcation of the penis, bad stricture of the urethra, phymosis, paraphymosis, warts, chordee, chancres, or excessive length of the frænum, cannot be considered absolute causes of impotence, as they can be remedied by surgical operations. Large scrotal herniæ cause recession of the penis, and render coition impracticable; but in some cases relief may be afforded. The same observations apply to large hydrocele. Sarcocoele or scirrhus of the testicle does not cause absolute impotence, as it may be removed by operation; and one testicle remaining is sufficient for procreation. The testicles may disappear by disease (R. Hamilton, Larrey, Fodéré,) or by the use of iodine. Three conditions are necessary on the part of the male for copulation—*erectio et intro-missio penis, cum seminis emissionem*. Impotence in men depends on defect of some one or more of these conditions; erection, intromission, and ejaculation of the spermatic fluid. The causes of impotence are more commonly observed in man than in



the other sex; and this is easily accounted for, by the greater part the male has to perform in nuptial congress. This is evident from the phenomena which give the virile member the form and disposition proper for erection, the introduction of the organ, and the ejaculation of the semen, effected by a violent and complicated action, which requires a concurrence of many indispensable conditions, as the organs not only contract spasmodically to effect the expulsion of the male fluid, but all the body participates in this convulsion at the moment of emission, as if nature at this instant forgot every other function. The causes of impotence in man arise from two sources, from malformation of the genitals or from want of action in them; but in females, impotence can only depend on malformation, natural or acquired, as the organs have little to do in the act of copulation, they being merely auxiliary to it.

The causes of want of erection may be divided into physical and moral. The physical causes depend on defects of the body, as paralysis of the penis, curvature of the spine,\* frigid and apathetic temperament. The moral causes are such as act

\* Dr. Harrison has lately published some cases of this kind, which were cured by the removal of the spinal disease. (Essay on the Powerful Influence of the Spinal Nerves on the Sexual Organs, 1831.)

powerfully on the imagination, and suddenly produce an atony of the genitals, or induce an inactivity in organs properly developed. The genital organs, says M. Virey, offer two states during life, in the young and old, which are the frozen zones of existence, the intermediate state is the torrid zone of life. The infant has nothing to give, the old has lost all. Immaturity of age and senescence are cause of want of erection. This doctrine, though generally correct, admits of exceptions, as children have been precociously developed even before the fourth year, examples of which have been cited; and our author described a boy, aged seven years, a native of the department of Lot, who was as fully developed as an adult, and who made the most furious comic attacks on his female acquaintance, and absolutely deprived one of them of that which she could never regain. On the other hand, a Frenchman, aged ninety-nine, married a tenth wife, and was a father at 102 (Bousquet;) and Thomas Parr, married at 120, and performed his nuptial duties so well at 140, as to make him forget his old age. He was even compelled to appear in a white sheet at one of our churches, for an amour, in his 150th year. He outlived nine kings of England. (Elliotson.) But in general, the power of procreation continues from puberty to the 65th year. Im



maturity of age, or senescence, may be put down as the first causes of want of power of erection. Among such causes, we must reckon a frigid or apathetic constitution, a total insensibility to sexual desire, and this is said to be an aggravated or profound lymphatic temperament. Descourtiz describes persons of this temperament in these words: "The hair is white, fair, and thin, no beard, countenance pale, flesh soft and without hair, voice clear, sharp, and piercing: the eyes sorrowful and dull, the form round, the shoulders straight, perspiration acid, testicles small, withered, pendulous, and soft, the spermatic cords small, the scrotum flaccid, the glands of the testicles insensible, no capillary growth on the pubes, a moral apathy, pusillanimity and fear, on the least occasion, are symptoms of anaphrodisia or impotence, or sterility, and any one having the majority of these signs is incapable of copulation or generation." (*Propositions sur l'Anaphrosidie.*)

A habitude of chastity is another opponent to erection, such as with the ancient fathers of the desert, and in those who, by fasting and other forms of church discipline, extinguish those feelings, implanted by nature, but, in their opinion, contrary to that purity which should distinguish those who have made vows of chastity. The organs of such

persons decay, like all corporeal organs whose functions are not exerted. Long continued debauchery, whether with women or by masturbation, will cause impotence. Every practitioner has met with cases of both these kinds. "The impotence," says Pinel, "caused by the latter excess, reduces youth to the nullity of age, and is too often incurable." Long watching, great fatigue, mental or corporeal, want of nutriment, excessive evacuations, sanguineous or otherwise, of blood, bile, fæces, saliva, menses, scorbutus, cachexia, marasmus, peripneumony, hydrothorax, anasarca, malignant fevers, diseases of the brain and spinal marrow, whether from external injuries or poisons, and numerous other diseases, are temporary causes of impotence. Sexual desire is suppressed by acute diseases, and returns after convalescence. Zacchias and Beck relate numerous cases in proof of this position. We see this further illustrated during the convalescence after fevers, when erection often occurs. Some diseases stimulate the generative organs, as calculus in the kidneys or bladder, gout, rheumatism, consumption, piles, mania, itch, leprosy, and other cutaneous affections. Others may diminish or suppress venereal desire for twenty-four years, when the functions will be restored. (Zacchias.)

Excessive venery is a frequent cause of want of



erection and impotence. I have been consulted in cases of this description, especially after marriage. This is a frequent cause of want of family in young married persons.

The abuses of narcotics, saline refrigerants, acids, acid fruits, iodine, camphor, and nitre are causes of impotence. Of all causes cold is the most powerful. Thus, in the Polar regions, there is neither love nor jealousy.

*Moral Causes.*—There are no facts which so evidently prove the influence of the moral over the physical state of man as the phenomena of erection. A lascivious idea will arise in the midst of our gravest meditations; the virile organ will answer its appeal, and will become erected, and fit, for the functions which nature has confided to it; but another thought arising, will instantaneously extinguish, with the most frigid indifference, all our amorous transports.

This statement is well exemplified by the effects of the passions. Chagrin, inquietude, and debilitating passions, prostrate the whole economy; jealousy and profound meditation impede the faculty of procreation. Thus, at the very moment when enjoyment is about to be commenced, too eager desire, the trouble which seizes on too ardent an imagination, the excess of love, the fear of not

being loved, timidity, respect, doubt of capability, the fear of being surprised, the shame of excessive modesty on being in the presence of witnesses, antipathy, the sudden knowledge of some physical defect in the female, aversion, from filth, odour, and pre-occupations of the mind, are sufficient to oppose erection, and to abate it most suddenly. But who can enumerate all the moral causes capable of impeding or destroying erection? A sigh, doubtfully interpreted, a recollection, an equivocal word, are sufficient to destroy the illusion, and congeal the most violent passion. A newly-married man has become suddenly impotent on discovering his bride was without a hymen; and a debauchee has as suddenly become impotent, on finding the membrane perfect. (Dict. des Sc. Medical.)—And thus with a literary man, a philosopher, or those who have a ruling idea, which excites the brain more than the sexual organs. The fear of being impotent is the most frequent and powerful cause of this condition. Thus the cases related by the illustrious Hunter, and the absurd impressions of former times, as to the influence of his Satanic majesty and his worthy colleagues, the witches. Men supposed there was no physical power when the moral state had consumed their desires, and they were impotent as long as they supposed them-



selves so. Such is the power of the moral over the physical state of man. How many impotent persons of this class were cured with bread pills, by Hunter; and how many are annually cured by mere placebos? In remote ages men allowed the illusions of the imagination to have a most extraordinary power over their minds and bodies. This was most remarkable in the subject before us.

Thus we cannot easily comprehend how the power of rue, or St. John's wort, could prevent a man, properly developed, from performing his nuptial duties on his bridal night; or how the pronunciation of a few obscure and unintelligible words, could have a similar effect. These words, were to be written on paper with the blood of a bat, sewed up with a needle which was used in making the shrouds of the dead, and then the charm was to be tied round the neck of the new-married man (Venette; also *Les Secrets du Petit Albert*), or merely pronounced. To cure this enchantment the church prescribed prayers, the doctors physic, and the law severe punishment. Bacon describes it in his *Natural History* as prevalent in Germany and France; in the latter country it was designated *nouer l'eguilette*, or tying the point. Mr. Hunter's plan was best. He ordered timid bridegrooms to refrain from any venereal combats for a week, no

matter what might be their desires, and then to try their powers. This cure was effectual, and many of his patients succeeded sufficiently to remove all unfavourable impressions of impotence ever afterwards. They casually took some mild form of medicine, and a few drops of tincture of opium each night, during the period of preparation.

*Impotence, natural, manifest, or accidental, in woman.*—It has been long held, I think erroneously, that the generative organs of the female are more complicated than those of the male, and therefore that the causes of impotence are more numerous and less apparent than in the other sex. If we examine the genital organs of both sexes anatomically, we shall find them equally complicated, and possessing an equal adaptation or arrangement of parts, as well as an identity of structure. Thus we find the structure of the penis very similar to that of the genital fissure and vagina, the double fold of prepuce, the cavernous structure, its performance of a part of the genito-urinary functions, the openings of the vesiculæ seminales and uterine tubes, the vesiculæ seminales and uterus, the testes and ovaries, the spermatic cords and the uterine tubes. We also find the diseases of one sex as numerous as those of the other; and those who doubt the assertion, need only refer to the works of



Chopart, Titley, and others, on diseases of the genito-urinary organs of the male, for ample proof of the position. I need scarcely observe, that diseases of the vasa deferentia, vesiculæ seminales, the pressure of tumours, hydatids, &c. on these parts, diseases of the prostate gland, urinary calculi, diseases of the urethra, fistulæ in perineo, diseases of the bladder, penis, and scrotum, will be found as numerous as those of the generative system of the other sex. Besides, it would be inconsistent with the wisdom and beneficence of Providence that one sex should have more to do in the perpetuation of the species than the other.

The causes of impotence in woman are malformation or diseases of the organs subservient to procreation. Some of these causes are apparent, others obscure. The apparent causes are, obliteration of the external sexual organs, both soft and hard, absence of the vagina and uterus, and great deformity of the pelvis, with numerous diseases of the external and internal genitals. The vagina and uterus have been found to consist of a dense, fleshy substance (Morgagni, Mott, Fodéré,) and the vagina has been partially closed by such substance. (Pare, Ruysch, Fabricius, Physick, Fodéré.)—It may be absent (Haller, Vicq. d'Azyr, Journ. des Savans, Boyer, Caillot, and Willaume,) unusually small,

impervious from adhesion, tumours, or a frænum passing across above the hymen, or it may be filled with a fleshy growth. If too narrow, it may be dilated with a bougie or a tent sponge, and when unattended to must be divided by incision, to admit the passage of the infant. It has closed up after conception. There is sometimes a great congenital confusion of parts, so much so, that it would be tedious, if not impossible to describe it. In cases of extreme narrowness, impregnation may take place, and the canal be gradually dilated during parturition. I have seen four cases of cohesion of the labia externa, at the age of puberty, so complete, that only a small probe could be introduced at the superior commissure. The vaginal canal may be totally or partially obliterated, and in such cases an operation is impracticable, and impotence absolute. The vagina has opened into the bladder (Sue,) rectum, anterior parietes of the abdomen, and pregnancy has occurred in the two latter cases. Morgagni attests that of the abdomen, lib. v. epist. 67; and the other is given in the *Annales de Med. de Montpellier*, which led the celebrated Louis to propose the following question to the casuists: "*An uxore sic disposita uti fas vel non, judicent theologi morales?*" Barbaut cites two examples of pregnancy of this kind. (*Dict. des Sc. Med., art. Impuissance.*)—Orfila con-



tends such malformation is a cause of impotence; for though coition is not physically impossible, it is contrary to the laws of morals and of nature. The royal court of Treves annulled a marriage in such a case. In cases of vesico-vaginal, recto-vaginal fistulæ, and amplification of the vagina from laceration of the perineum, inflammation and ulceration may occur and impede sexual intercourse; but such cases could not warrant a divorce, as they occurred after marriage. Excessive straitness or partial occlusion of the vagina, is no impediment to procreation, as fecundation may occur, if the spermatic fluid be applied inside the labia, as already mentioned. Besides, fecundation has happened, and the hymen perfect. (Ruysch, Pare, Smellie, Hildanus, Mauriceau, Baudelocque, Nægele, Nysten, Journ. de Med. de Corvisart, and Leroux.)—Prolapsion and some forms of ulceration of the vagina, are only temporary causes of impotence. Cauliflower tumours of the clitoris or nymphæ may be temporary causes of impotence, as also tumours in the vagina. (Burns, Trans. Dublin College of Phys. 1824, vol. iv.; Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journ., 1805.)—Leucorrhœa is one of the most common causes of sterility.

The uterus may be absent. (Columbus, Schlegel, Morgagni, Meyer, Renauldin, Hamilton, Bousquet,

Theden, Engel, Lieutaud, Caillot, Ford, and Breschet.)—I might quote numerous writers who describe the cavity of the uterus divided by a septum, but it is not stated whether or not procreation was impeded. Many authors have also described partial or total obliteration of the uterine cavity, among whom are Bichat, Lallement, Segard, Gardien, &c. The uterus may be double, that is, there may be two uteri. (Haller, Purcell, *Med. Facts*, vol. iii. *Mem. Med. Science*, vol. iv. *Lond. Med. Journ.* 1782, vol. iii. *Dict. des Sc. Med*, *Medical Transactions*, vol. vi. Duges, *Journal de Progrès*, vol. xxii.)—A vicious direction of the os and cervix uteri, and complete occlusion of the former, are irremedial causes of sterility. The whole of the causes of impotence and sterility in females may be arranged under three classes: 1. those depending on the organs which receive the male fluid, namely, the genital fissure, the vagina, and the uterus; 2. malformation or diseases of the organs that transmit it to the ovaries, and reconvey the embryo to the uterus, and these are the fallopian or uterine tubes; 3. the malformation or diseases of the ovaries, or organs which supply the germ for fecundation. Inflammation, ulceration, scirrhus, cancer, ossification, calcareous deposit, or tumours in any of these organs, may be the cause of sterility. In fact, any



disease of the female genitals, attended with much constitutional disturbance, may be held a temporary cause of sterility. Tumours of various kinds, callosities, cicatrices, adhesion, from disease or mechanical violence, displacement of the uterus, prolapsus, procidentia, retroversion, antiversion, lateral obliquity, and the various disorganizations incident to muscular, serous, and to mucous tissues, when present in the female organs, are causes of sterility. In the London Medical and Surgical Journal, 1830, vol. iv. is an account of two singular cases of procidentia uteri; in both impregnation was effected through the natural orifice, though permanently fixed without the genital fissure for years. I have also published cases of dysmenorrhœa, in which pregnancy occurred. In the disease called irritable uterus, so well described by Gooch and Dewees, a cure may be effected. In absence of the ovaries and uterine tubes there can be no conception; or in dropsy, or enlargement of the former; or in occlusion or adhesion of the latter to the uterus or adjoining parts. There are some cases of constitutional sterility, which are inexplicable; for example, those in which a woman has had no family for years, and at length becomes a mother.

The principal moral causes of impotence are hatred, disgust, fear, timidity, and excessive ardour

of desire, divers ramblings of the imagination; in a word, every passion strongly excited, that is to say, all cerebral action so strong as to diminish that of the genital organs, which require for coition great exaltation. Conception seldom happens under such circumstances. Fodéré is of opinion that complaisance, tranquillity, silence, and secrecy are necessary for prolific coition; it is arrested, as if by enchantment, by noise, dread, fear, publicity, jealousy, contempt, repugnance, slovenliness, by love too much respected, and by every thing that can illumine the imagination.

Many of the causes of impotence in both sexes may be removed, but many are beyond the reach of art. It has been long maintained that the powers of the mind have great influence in promoting and impeding the process of procreation.

From the preceding statements we may, I think, deduce the following general principles:

1. To declare either sex impotent, it is necessary that certain physical causes be permanent, malformations or accidental lesions, and be evident to our senses, which art cannot remedy, and which prevent the faculty of exercising a fecundating coition.

2. These causes, when rigorously examined, are few in number.

3. The moral causes of impotence ought not to be



taken into consideration, as they would serve as an excuse for an individual accused of impotence.

4. That if there is the slightest penetration into the vagina, it is sufficient to excite in the other sex a degree of erethysm necessary for fecundation; or if the spermatic fluid is applied at the entrance of the vagina virile impotence cannot be admitted.

In this country the medical jurist is seldom required to decide questions of impotence or sterility in our courts of justice; but every medical practitioner may be consulted in private, either before or after matrimonial engagements. He may be the cause of great domestic trouble, and embitter the life of male or female. He should be exceedingly cautious in fixing the stigma of impotence or sterility on either party. The legitimacy of children may be contested on a plea of impotence, and such a plea may be offered by a man accused of rape. It is therefore evident that a proper knowledge of the subject is necessary to the medical practitioner.

*Ambiguity of Sex.—Hermaphrodites.*—There may be malformation of the genitals in both sexes, but there is no example of one individual possessing the perfect organs of both. Again, the organs may not resemble those of either male or female. There is no truth in the statement, that hermaphrodites have married and propagated; the obstetrician is

aware of the physical impossibility of a full-grown infant passing through the male pelvis. It is evident that hermaphrodites must be impotent and sterile. The ancient physicians were of opinion that such persons might propagate. Even a canonist went so far as to maintain one individual could propagate within himself or herself, "*tanquam mas generare ex alio, et tanquam fœmina generare in se ipsa.*" There is no case on record of a perfect hermaphrodite, and no truth whatever in the assertion that such class of beings can propagate the species. I can see no difficulty in supposing that persons of both sexes, with malformations of the genital organs, may marry, when I recollect the curious and well-attested case of a female, who dressed in male attire, and assumed the name of James Allen, married another female, and lived, as a husband for several years without detection. This case happened in London, in 1829, and was discovered when Allen died; and on dissection was found to be a well-formed female. Also the case of Marie Marguerite, who was born in 1792, and considered a female till 1813, when her real sex was determined, as mentioned by the French jurists.

Voltaire, that enemy to religion and disgrace to mankind, exerted his depraved mind to prove that hermaphrodites, or androgyni, might beget off-



spring. He said there were many insects of both sexes; and why not the human race be of the same nature? I answer, because the union of the reproductive organs in the same individual must prevent all possibility of generation. In such a case, and no such is on record, or could happen, there should be two distinct sets of arteries, veins, nerves, and organs, which have never been discovered by anatomists. Would it not be inconsistent in our species and in almost all classes of perfect animals, to be amorous and to be the object loved; to be ever present with the object of desire, and every instant to have the means of gratifying desire? Human life would be a tissue of amorous transports and of luxurious sacrifices, which would render man totally unfitted for the performance of the social duties allotted to his condition.

The idea is absurd, erroneous, unscientific, unnatural, unscriptural, and could only have been cherished by a miserable infidel, ignorant of anatomical and physiological science, an enemy to nature, morals, and the divine principles of Christianity.

Rocheport relates in his dictionary a case of a Scotch servant, an hermaphrodite, who was condemned to be buried alive, for having impregnated the master's daughter, and that the French parliament permitted persons of this class to marry,

whether they were men or women, but never to deviate from the functions of the sex which they had adopted.

Skenchius asserted he knew a reputed hermaphrodite married to a man, and who had sons and daughters, and yet that this person impregnated servant maids. Here is a medical fact with a vengeance, one of the mendacious stories of the dark ages. If we examine this case critically, we find it unsatisfactory and incredible. It is a hearsay fable, a reputed case, with no description of the genital organs, no proof that the individual possessed male organs. Admitting that this person had elongation of the clitoris, it was more likely that the servants distributed their favours, after a partial taste of the sweets of Venus, than confined themselves to the embraces of this individual. Such was the gross credulity of physicians in ancient times, and the wisdom and infallibility of canonists, who held the maxim, "that a man could propagate in himself, and a woman in herself."

Blackstone says, "a monster having deformity in any part of its body, yet if it hath human shape, may inherit; and every heir is male, or female, or hermaphrodite; that is, both male and female, and shall be heir according to that kind of sex which doth prevail and accordingly it ought to be baptized.



The same is observed in cases concerning tenants by courtesy." As the brain is generally perfect in monsters, and the mind perfect, it is clear that such persons ought to inherit property. When two perfect bodies are united at the chest or back, as in the cases of the Siamese youths, lately exhibited in this city, and the Hungarian sisters, exhibited in 1723, it would be difficult to determine primogeniture, or right to property.

Before I consider the treatment of impotence, a few words may be said on the law relating to divorce, on account of this defect.

*Divorce.*—Marriage cannot be legally contracted in these countries without the full and free consent of the parties, and hence medical men may be called on to decide whether one of the parties was incompetent to form the compact from mental imbecility, inebriation, or narcotism. Adultery, of either party, or external violence, is a sufficient cause for divorce in this country. The former can be proved by the temporary impotence of the husband at the time of a conception, or by the birth of an infant in the absence of the latter (see Legitimacy in my work on Forensic Medicine;) or by the existence of syphilis in either party. By the law of this empire the parties may marry again; but in all Catholic countries there can be no second marriage, during the

life of either party. A divorce is granted whenever it is proved that corporeal imbecility existed before marriage. The contract is declared null and void, ab initio. Imbecility after marriage is not a sufficient cause, because there was no fraud in the original contract (Blackstone;) and to provide for this case, the ritual prescribes in the marriage ceremony, by compelling each party to swear "that he or she takes each other for better for worse, in sickness and in health, until death doth ye part.

*Treatment of Impotence.*—There is no work in the English language which gives a complete account of the causes and treatment of impotence; and hence I have undertaken the task of supplying this want, with what success the reader must determine. The subject is one of importance to all classes of society, and deserves as much attention as any other malady. How much is one to be pitied who never felt the desires of love, whose icy heart never palpitates at the sight of a lovely woman. His existence resembles the insensible marble; his soul is as cold as the stones of the grave; his life resembles death. But how much more is he to be pitied, who has extinguished his desires, and languishes to obtain that pleasure which his organs refuse, and which he cannot obtain at the expense of all his tenderness for a sex which he



adores. The first must remain in the sad apathy in which he is plunged; the second may be ensured hope in the majority of cases. Persons affected with impotence must avoid the alluring promises of empirics, who, one and all, are perfectly ignorant of the innumerable causes of the affection, and whose nostrums do much more harm than good. It will appear by the subsequent remarks, that no single plan of treatment is effectual; that a variety of causes must be removed by a variety of remedies. Many of these causes are removable by medicine or by surgical operation; many are beyond the power of either. In corroboration of the truth of these remarks I am happy to quote the authority of Sir A. Cooper.

“There are,” say he, in his last course of lectures, 1823, “several causes which produce a destruction of the virile power. These may sometimes be traced to a peculiar sluggishness of constitution, to a general torpor of the procreative system, on which the usually attractive animal affinities exert no influence. To such persons a Venus might display her charms, and on such her son might exhaust his quiver in vain. No genial spring is here, no blooming summer or fruitful autumn, but all is winter, a dreary, desolate, and barren winter, in which the springs of life are frozen up and the

animal propensities destroyed. Some men are so constituted that they may be said never to possess a venereal stimulus, and some of the other sex are equally frigid. I knew a person who remained unwarmed by the flame from the hymeneal altar for seven years, and who was incapable of performing the duties which devolved on him.

“Gentlemen, it is likely you may hereafter be consulted on these subjects; but these are some of the arcana of the profession into which you will not readily be admitted. No, it is not until you have contended long with popular prejudices that you will be made acquainted with such important secrets. When forty years of practice, or perhaps more, shall have rolled over you, when you shall have the snow on the tops of the mountains (*here the esteemed professor, with great good-humour, passed his hand through the white locks which grace a well-formed front:*) then it is, and not till then, that you will be required to give your opinion on such weighty matters! (*A laugh.*) When consulted by persons about to enter the marriage state, you should ask if they have any developement of sexual power in the morning? and if they have, depend on it they will not be deficient in energy in the after part of the day; but if otherwise, advise them by no means to marry.



“Another cause which might produce the calamity we are now considering, is an *excessive irritability*, of the *vesiculæ seminales*, which produces a premature expulsion of the seminal fluid, and this is almost as bad as the former cause. Sometimes it is the result of debauchery, but most frequently it occurs in irritable and delicate young men. In such cases we have to support the constitution by a generous diet and bark, giving at the same time opium, to allay the irritability. In addition to which, let the person stand over a large pan of cold water, and dash it over the genitals two or three times in the day. Turpentine and rhubarb are sometimes given, but I am not sure that they do any good.

“Another cause of impotence is the frequency of nocturnal emissions, and this is most commonly the case with young people. It is frequently the effect of bad habits at school, and it occasions a great degree of anxiety. We must try to lessen this, by representing to the party that it is an occurrence which frequently happens to persons in a state of health every nine days or a fortnight, although in the patient's case it may happen two or three times during the night. The treatment of this species will be very much as the preceding.

“Sometimes it arises from a wasting of the testi-

cle, or from an abscess of this gland, producing absorption of its structure. The removal of one testicle does not destroy, neither does it seriously impair the generative power. The removal of both, however, emasculates. There is an opinion to the contrary, but it is an erroneous one. This loss of power does not happen at once, the secretion of the semen continues for a short time, and the inclination and the power remain; but gradually the desire, and afterwards the power is extinguished.

“Impotence sometimes arises from the testicles not having descended. Mr. Hunter has said that the testicles, when confined in the abdomen, do not exercise their functions. This is the case when the testicle is pressed upon by a congenital hernia, when in the inguinal canal; but in the case of an apprentice of mine, who shot himself because his testicles had not descended, the secretory ducts were found full of semen. Impotence sometimes arises from the state of mind, generally from too great an impetuosity and eagerness to cohabit. A gentleman, for example, is recently married, and if not able to perform his wishes in two or three days, he is very full of anxiety, and the imbecility is considered by him to be permanent. When consulted by such a person, you must not try to laugh him out of it, but tell him that it is not uncommon,



but that it is necessary that he should promise you to abstain from the attempt for three or four days, or until he has taken all the pills which you will give him. These may be made of some harmless material, and that if he will observe what he has promised, he is sure to get quite well. He takes two or three pills; but the very promise he has made, and the impression made on his mind by the promise, induces him to do the very contrary, and it seldom happens that he can return with any complaint." (Lancet, 1824.)

Such are the very brief observations of the first surgeon in the world, on the causes and treatment of impotence. That there is much room for a further consideration of the subject I shall endeavour to prove in the subsequent remarks.

In the first place, we should endeavour to remove all defects of conformation that are curable by surgical operation, restore diminished function, regulate disordered action, and tranquillize all parts, especially the brain, whose excessive activity affects the generative organs. Every well-informed physician and surgeon must admit that a great variety of medicines and of operations may be resorted to with advantage. It is to be recollected, however, that most of the pretended aphrodisiacs, external and internal, electricity, flaggellation, and urtication

are without effect, or produce a momentary effect, and that a complete change of regimen and of life can produce the necessary effect on the economy.

In the second place, to avoid excess, to appease the imagination, to regulate the digestive functions, that is, to attend to the morbid conditions of the brain and stomach, which so often cause impotence, is the only method upon which we can hope for legitimate success.

In the last place, we must regulate the function of menstruation.

Impotence may arise from excessive venery, natural or otherwise. Thus we find young persons, before the adult age, incapable of procreation; others equally so in the prime of life, and others in this condition about the middle age. These unfortunate persons seldom consult respectable physicians or surgeons, or if they do, are too often derided and unrelieved; and hence the application to ignorant quacks, who fatten upon the fears of their victims.

I have now a gentleman under my care, who was treated in this manner, and driven to a rapacious empiric, who in a time fleeced him of fifty pounds, for much injury received. Such cases are of daily occurrence. Derided by the profession, or exposed to acquaintances, such persons are almost afraid to



consult their ordinary medical attendants, too many of whom forget the sacred pledge they have given, on obtaining their diplomas, to keep secret all delicate cases which come before them. Hence, an unreserved disclosure of the symptoms is seldom given, from fear of exposure, or through bashfulness, though the most implicit confidence may be placed in all eminent and honourable members of the profession. I shall not prosecute these remarks, but proceed to consider the subject under notice.

It is universally admitted by all medical writers that excessive venery, either by bad habits acquired at school or by legitimate means, too generally cause impotence and sterility. It would be foreign to our purpose to expatiate upon this subject, but I may observe, that excess of amorous pleasures produces nervousness, hypochondriasis, indigestion, disorder of the digestive functions, melancholy, and great enervation of body and imbecility of mind, the latter often causing a great propensity to suicide. Those to whom these observations apply will find all their multitudinous symptoms under the above heads, in any popular system of medicine.

Dr. Parry speaks thus of immoderate and precocious coition: "*Inde apud mares oritur cultus præcox et effrenus, quo nihil mentem magis infirmat, nihil corporis vires frangit, nihil articulorum, ven-*

tricoli, cordis cerebri, morbis virium magis obnoxium reddit." (Pathology, 1825.) "Hæc vero nimis culta," says Professor Gregory, "valde nocet præsertim junioribus, quorum animos pariter ac corpora multum degenerat." (Conspectus de Med.) Every person's feelings must convince him of the languor, lassitude, and inertness which succeed the evacuation of the spermatic fluid. This was noticed by Aristotle, who said, "Tristiam autem multam seminis emissionem censet, cur ex omnibus animantibus homo maxime omnium, postquam concubuit dissolvatur et languescat."

Frequent seminal emissions, whether by coition, masturbation, or pollution, greatly debilitate the mind, and enervate the body generally, and the reproductive organs in particular, which are rendered incapable of performing their natural functions. Physiologists hold that the semen must be retained for sometime in its receptacles, where its thinner parts are absorbed, before it can be prolific. Masturbation, manustrupation, or onanism, is the unnatural effusion of the seminal fluid, and is too commonly induced by young persons by the force of bad example. It is highly injurious to health, is contrary to morals, religion, and nature. It is condemned in the sacred writings, Gen. c. xxxviii. v. 10; Deut. c. xxiii. v. 10, 11.; Lev. c. xv. v. 16;



John, c. iii. v. 9; Prov. c. xxii. v. 11; Matt. c. vi. v. 1; Cor. c. vi. v. 15; Rom. c. i. v. 8. It is contrary to human nature; because it is beastly, terrestrial, and unworthy of man. It is sometimes commenced before puberty, and at this period becomes inveterate, unless removed by the legitimate pleasures of love; and if continued, excites an invincible estrangement from natural pleasure. When young persons are addicted to this destructive habit, they become inactive, dejected, fond of solitude, the appetite is diminished, there is great depression of spirits, and a total disinclination to activity, playfulness, and vivacity. These symptoms are greatly increased by the constant and frequent repetition of their cause. The forehead is partially covered with crimson-coloured hard pimples, called acne. There is great timidity and disrelish for society by such persons. The memory is impaired, and the power of comprehension considerably diminished; all the mental faculties so much injured, that stupidity, idiocy, or lunacy, sooner or later appears. The digestion is much injured, and flatulence becomes a troublesome symptom, even before or after puberty. The senses of vision and hearing become imperfect; and blindness from amaurosis, or deafness frequently occurs. I was once consulted by a young man who had amaurosis of both eyes, whose spirits

were as depressed as possible, and who finally confessed that excessive masturbation had produced his disease. We can easily understand how this and a variety of other formidable diseases may arise from too frequent coition, when it is recollected that it produces the most vivid and repeated stimulation of the whole nervous system, and excites an acute or chronic irritability, or total loss of sensibility in organs which are naturally the most irritable. Mr. Hunter was of opinion, that masturbation, unless excessive, was not more injurious than coition, (*Work on Venereal*, 1st edition;) but he recanted in his future editions. He forgot that the solitary masturbator can repeat his crime as often as he pleases; but the compliance of a female is not always to be obtained. Few escape the evil results of onanism, which is much worse than coition, being more frequently repeated, and being more vivid and violent. Hence we find it induces the worst forms of indigestion or morbid sensibility of the stomach, (*Andral, Pathol.*) the worst form of hypochondriasis, or lowness of spirits, (*Martinet, Therapeutics*), aneurism, and other incurable diseases of the heart and its large vessels, (*Dict. de Med. and Chir. Pratiques*, art. *Arteritis*), all the diseases of the brain and spinal marrow, (*Dict. Abrégé des Sc. Med.* art. *Onanisme*), feebleness of the whole muscular sys-



tem, chronic inflammation of the viscera of the chest, abdomen, and pelvis, and consumption, (Op. Cit.) stricture of the urethra, suppression or incontinence of urine, piles, and nocturnal emissions. These are only a few of the evils induced by excessive venery, as will appear by a reference to Tissot's work upon Onanism, to Winchman de Pollutione diurna, Beddoes on Hygeia, and A. P. Buchan's production, entitled "Venus sine Conubitu."

It has been held, from time immemorial, by moralists, physicians, and divines, that the mind, or imagination, by dwelling on obscene subjects, excites the commission and repetition of masturbation; and consequently, that the suppression and prevention of impure ideas is the chief indication for the prevention of this habit. The cure is certainly in the mind rather than in the body. Hence it is, that breaking through the association of such ideas, controls and prevents even the most inveterate habit. Thus we find constant occupation prevents obscene ideas, and therefore constant attention to business, and exercise in the open air, are to be strictly enjoined in the treatment of this miserable affection. Solitude, indolence, and sedentary pursuits are to be carefully avoided. All causes which excite amorous ideas must be avoided; and

the association of such ideas which has been long cherished, and influences the mind even during sleep, by exciting dreams and nocturnal pollutions, is completely destroyed by the use of opium, or other sedatives, at bed-time. Dreaming is often prevented by sleeping with the head considerably raised, which accelerates the return of blood from the brain. The best position upon which the patient can compose himself to sleep is on either side; for sleeping upon the back should be avoided.

The first and great rule to be impressed upon the sufferer is to return to the paths of nature. The next, to remove his morbid sensibility, or irritability, to all internal and external objects, by advising him to avoid all impure ideas or meditations, and by improving his general health. The derangements of the digestive organs claim great attention, and are to be improved by the ordinary remedies for dyspepsia and hypochondriasis. Cold sea bathing, and daily affusion of cold water on the genitals, are beneficial. Should there be an excessive secretion of semen, the food must not be too nutritious, as, of course, it increases all secretions. All drink should be rather cold and all liquors avoided. When the patient is reduced to a state of impotence from excessive seminal emissions, he too often supposes that these can be



arrested by medicine. I have been often applied to under such circumstances after marriage; but need scarcely mention, there is no astringent capable of arresting the evacuation. Such persons also request some temporary excitant; being ignorant that temporary excitement will be followed by collapse, and perhaps an extinction of the venereal appetite. The tincture of lytta has produced this effect. Of this and other aphrodisiac medicines hereafter.—The health should be restored so as to enable the sufferer to enter into wedlock. This is the natural cure for the malady. As the mind is greatly depressed in those who have indulged in excessive masturbation, they suppose themselves impotent should they fail to accomplish their wishes with a female selected at random; but this is an erroneous idea; for while the venereal desire continues, and the organs are natural, there may be moral; but not absolute impotence. In such cases, some physicians have recommended concubinage; and if it succeeds, then marriage. This advice is decidedly immoral; but is followed in general without a medical counsellor, that the reader must not be too ready to censure the faculty for occasionally proposing it. In any case, should the person marry, the rule laid down as to diet in a former paragraph is not to be followed, as here the most nutritious

aliment, with a moderate use of vinous or ardent liquors, will be requisite to restore the general health and strength which had been impaired.

In some cases, the seminal vesicles discharge their contents, without any venereal desire being experienced, when the bowels are evacuated. This form of seminal effusion was called Diurnal Pollution, by Celsus, (Book iv. c. 21,) and other ancient writers. It is sometimes accompanied by the usual sensation. In other instances, the semen is effused on walking, without erection, but with voluptuous sensations. A case of this kind came under my care, in 1825, the subject of which was a gentleman aged 26, of a sanguineous temperament, spare habit, and tall stature. He was married about a year, and was distressed by as many as ten seminal emissions during the day, which were excited by the friction of his dress. He ascribed the original cause of his condition to the habit acquired at school. He did not indulge in natural marital rights more than once a week. He had tinc. opii every night, a blister to the perineum, and a free use of sulph. quininæ, cold sea-bathing, &c., which removed his complaint. He was also advised to obviate the urgency of his infirmity by natural resources. Dr. Colles, the justly celebrated professor, of Dublin, was consulted in this case, and



concured in this mode of treatment. In a subsequent case, I found, in addition to the plan of treatment advised in these pages, that the daily introduction of a bougie was productive of much benefit. In cases of impotence arising from moral causes in which nuptial duty cannot be accomplished after marriage, the use of opium, with total abstinence from all attempts at procreation for a few days, nutritious diet, excitant drinks, and lytta, after the effect of the sedative had ceased, are generally efficacious.

I need scarcely observe, that the practitioner should endeavour to alleviate or cure all the diseases of the genital organs. Besides manifest diseases of these organs, impotence may be produced by other causes, as the previous excessive use of the organs. Thus we find young persons, scarcely of the adult age, incapable of procreation; others equally so in the prime of life; and others in this condition when approaching the climacteric period. These unfortunate individuals seldom consult regular physicians; and if they do, they are treated with levity or derision, and therefore they must commit themselves to rash and unprincipled empirics. Dr. Cullen asserted there was no medicine or food capable of increasing the generative functions; and hence all British writers subsequent

to his time have implicitly adopted his opinion. Therefore medical practitioners in this country, when applied to in cases of impotence, have no means of acquiring therapeutic information, or of affording relief to their miserable patients; some will observe, there is the *tinctura lyttæ*, so loudly praised as an aphrodisiac in many of our dispensaries; but we must recollect that it is as extensively condemned in others. When this remedy fails, as it generally does, then we must commit our dejected patients to the distressing despondency of their condition. It is therefore right to describe the remedies proposed in other countries; many of which are highly useful, others inert.

That some substances possess a power of exciting sexual desires cannot be doubted, for they manifest their power on animals, which cannot be supposed, like man, to be under the influence of imagination: thus the hemp-seed, buckwheat, will excite birds to copulate; and oysters, if eaten at the spawning time, will excite man, according to Bloch, and even their effects at times are very generally acknowledged.

Among the substances which augment the action of the generative organs, we find some which act by affording an abundance of chyle and general renovation, and these are called *spermatopia*; and



others that act on the genital organs as excitants, as aromatics and stimulants, which first act as the former, and then are called *aphrodisiac* remedies.

*Spermatopia*.—All alimentary and highly nutritious substances are included in the first class, and these are evidently useful in all cases of debility, from whatever cause, from abuse of venereal pleasures, excessive fatigue, long and intense study, copious evacuations, inanition of every kind, as during convalescence after fevers and acute diseases; and in all these cases aphrodisiacs do more harm than good. Then to all who have lost the power of erection from such causes, we exhibit mild, light, and nutritious food, which does not fatigue the stomach, which is easily converted into chyle, which is slightly tonic and stimulant; for example, strong chicken or fowl broth or jelly, slightly spiced, turtle, and other soups, eggs, oysters, rice-milk, sago, arrow-root, salep, chocolate, roast or broiled meats, a moderate quantity of white wine, air, and exercise of various kinds, walking, riding, &c., flesh brush, &c.

*Aphrodisiacs*.—We find many vegetable substances produce effects on the reproductive system. Thus the genus of plants called *umbelliferæ*, as the artichoke, celery, seeds and root of parsnip, carrot, and fennel. *Cruciferæ*, as radish, turnip, water-

cresses, and rockets, which were strewed at the temple of Priapus;

Et quæ frugifero seritur vicina Priapo  
Excitet ut Veneri tardos eruca maritos.

In the class *acotyledones*, the orange, mushrooms, especially the smaller kind, which with sweetbread were so lauded by Ovid. The French also include the *leguminous* plants—beans, especially those called French beans, which from their flatulent properties in distending the intestinal canal in the vicinity of the spermatic cords, excite the circulation in them, and thus ultimately excite the testicles, inducing artificial plethora, or increased circulation of blood in these organs. We must not forget the class *gynandria-diandria* of Linnæus, the *orchis*, *ophiris*, and *satyrion*. The bulbous roots of these plants resemble the testicles, exhale a spermatic odour, which has long fixed the attention of men, and induced them to think these excited love. Linnæus states that the leaves of *orchis bifolia* render bulls more ardent and vigorous for copulation. This class is highly nutritive; and hence the bulbs may be given without sugar, or in any other convenient manner. We find, in Genesis, that Rachel married Jacob; but had no family until she ate a certain plant, when she conceived of Joseph. This plant is called *dudaim* in the Hebrew



ext, and is called *cucumis dudaim* by Linnæus, a species of *orchides*: of this family is also the salep, which is prepared as an article of diet, in the proportion of ʒ ss. to Oij. of water.

The sweet fruits, as peaches, pine-apples, raspberries, &c. are styled *spermatopia*. Of all the foods, fresh eggs are the most powerful aphrodisiacs. Chaumenton praises a fresh egg and chocolate, the yolk especially, as highly nutritious and aphrodisiac; and even we have a proof afforded by analogy from the stallion, whose generative functions are wonderfully increased by the use of eggs and sweet milk. We find it recorded, that Alcimenes, an Athenian, had triumphantly made fifty women mothers in one night!!! But perhaps this demigod had taken a few poached eggs to supper. It is also stated, that crabs, lobsters, pigeons, almonds, and hazel-nuts, have wonderful influence on the genital functions, as also oysters, rayfish, and all cartilaginous fish. It has been long observed, that the Japanese, and other ichthyophagous nations, are highly prolific. There is no more prolific people than the Irish, the lower orders of whom almost wholly subsist on potatoes and fresh eggs; but we should recollect, that the greater part of our arrow-root is made from the potatoe, according to Dr. Paris (*Pharmacologia*.) Of all the causes of impo-

tence, excessive venery, and too much chastity, are the most common; and to these we may add a cold and apathetic temperament, which arises from infirm and unhealthy parents. The sexual organs of such persons are badly developed. The excessive use and abuse of narcotics and refrigerants are causes of impotence. Phosphorus is a most powerful aphrodisiac; but cannot be exhibited, being a violent poison. Animals, to which it has been exhibited, died of the most violent and amorous convulsions. Borax has been exhibited to horses, and renders them most ardent; and that produced from sea-salt is best, which perhaps accounts for the salacity of the residents on the coasts.

In the class *aroides*, we have the *arum colocasia* of Linnæus, which is lauded by the Egyptians; the flowers of *pathos*, or *calamus aromaticus*, by the Malays. The saffron of the Juddææ is highly praised in the Ency. Méthodique. The seeds and leaves of the hemp are in great reputation with the Turks and Indians, combined with musk, ambergris, and sugar. The species *amomum* are remarkably aphrodisiac; galanga, ginger, cardamom, zedoary, curcuma, and the *maranta galanga* of Linnæus, which is extolled by the Egyptians. The *myristicæ* are also included, as pimenta, mace, cannella, myrtle. The Jews caused newly-married



persons to repose on the flowers of sage and marjoram; and also used embrocations of oil of *spike*. We should not forget the ginseng, celebrated by the Chinese, the betel of the Indian, and the pepper, lauded by Tourtelle and Peyrilhe, or the opium and aromatics used by the Turks. The juniper berries, savine, and turpentine, have been long considered aphrodisiac, all of which irritate the urethra and vaginal canal, as in leucorrhœa and gonorrhœa. Many animal substances have been praised by the ancients, as the celebrated hypomane, which was nothing but the mucus of the vagina of the mare, which excited the stallion. (Olivier de Serres, *Théâtre d'Agriculture*.) Castor, ambergris, musk, and civet, are also said to be of undoubted efficacy. Prosper Alpinus informs us, that the women in his time rubbed the genital fissure with ambergris and musk, to reconcile the good graces of their husbands. (Med. Egypt, lib. iii. c. 15.) There is also a species of lizard, used by the Egyptians, called by the French *scinque Marin*, the yellow amber, the cricket, the ant, the spider, and lytta, which the women of Kamtschatka devour to promote fecundation. The use of cantharides ought to be banished from medicine, as it is a most violent poison, and it only causes priapism without desire, or violent strangury and inflammation of the bladder.

Paré relates the case of an Abbé, who intended to be chevalier of Venus, and who had taken a dose of this drug, which produced a mortal hæmaturia. A cautious use of this medicine may produce aphrodisiac effects. The following formulæ are lauded in France as aphrodisiacs:

Essentia Regalis.

℞. Ambræ Griseæ, ʒ ij.

Moschi, ʒ j.

Zibethi, ʒ ss.

Olei Canellæ.

——e Ligno Rhodii. } aa M iv.

Carbonatis Potassæ, ʒ ss.

Tincturæ Rosarum.

—— Flor. Aurant. } aa ʒ iss.

Solidis prius commixtis, dein immitantur olea, et denique tincturæ, stent in lagena bene obturata per triduum illico coletur liquor, et hujus sumantur minima pauca in syrupo.

℞. Panacis quinque folii pulv. ʒ v.

Vanillæ aromaticæ, ʒ x.

Succini essentia, ʒ ss.

Tincturæ Lyttæ, ʒ v.

Olei Canellæ, m℥.

Sacchari purificat. lbx.

Mucilaginis, q. s.



M. et divide in pastillos granorum xxiv ex his sumantur quatuor singulis horis.

The tincture of Magnanimity of Dr. Virey is loudly extolled; but I am unable to state its composition.

It is curious that many inert substances have an effect on some individuals, and will excite them to venery, though inert on others: those are the various vinous and ardent liquors. Bousquet never took rice and milk without much amorous propensities.

Independently of the various alimentary and medicinal substances now enumerated, there are others afforded by art and instinct which are originally preferred to all drugs, as cold baths, erotic lectures, voluptuous music, amorous prints, female society, nudity, &c. "Eh!" says Bousquet, "quel homme resista jamais à la vue d'un jolie sein?" What passion and sensation arises at the sight of a lovely woman, a voluptuous marble, or print! When all these means fail, it is necessary to resort to other measures, which are thus described by our Gallic contemporaries: "Il faut en venir aux frictions, aux attouchemens à l'excitations du mamelon, et des testicules, au chatouillement de la peau des lombes, ou de la partie interne des cuisses, aux lavemens âcres, au ligatures, au message à l'emploi de l'électricité et même de l'urtication, et de la flagellation."

Flagellation causes powerful erection, and this has been long observed when soldiers underwent such punishment. Rousseau was thus affected at his eighth year, which was observed by his governess, who never after punished him. (Confessions.) He as well as Swift was impotent from bad habits acquired at school. Strangulation is also an excitant, and men have lost their lives by urging it too far to gratify their desires. Such is the treatment of the physical causes of impotence. We next proceed to consider that of the moral causes.

*Treatment of Impotence induced by Moral Causes.*

All the depressing passions have great influence on the organs of the body, and their removal often claims the attention of the physician. The most frequent of these causes which impede the generative act are chagrin and inquietude. In such cases we prescribe the consolations of friendship and those occupations which divert the mind, and to these we add the use of tonics. Again, we know that ambition and jealousy have great influence on the cerebral system, and often produce great activity in these and other organs, and hence we prescribe light, nourishing nutriment, acidulated drinks, a milk and vegetable diet, and recommend less exer-



tion of the imagination, exercise almost to fatigue, and on no account the use of aphrodisiac remedies.

The effects of the strong passions if prolonged, such as ambition, hatred, jealousy, will suddenly prostrate the genital faculty in man; so also will too ardent desires, excited imagination, excess of love, fear of not being loved, excessive modesty, and numerous other sudden emotions of the mind, will suddenly destroy erection. These causes are to be ascribed to irritability, and are best relieved by tonics and antispasmodics. But what can we prescribe, if impotence arise from disgust, or physical imperfection in the female?

*Sterility in Man.*—It must be admitted by the best informed physicians, that in most cases it is absolutely impossible to determine, during life, what are the causes which render man or woman sterile. The most common causes in the former are immaturity of age, excessive venery, or senescence, together with defect of harmony between the moral and physical states of his constitution, the frigidity or the inordinate ardour of temperament; and perhaps these likewise apply to the other sex.

It is only on dissection we can be able to discover the physical causes of sterility. Then can we discover the absence of spermatic arteries, of the

seminal receptacles and their appendages, the vasa deferentia, &c. The spermatic cords are often extensively diseased. The testicles may be atrophied or hypertrophied. If the secretion of the seminal fluid be slow and imperfect, as in weak, delicate habits, there will be more chance of fecundity than in strong and vigorous habits. Similar to the other secretions in the economy, that of the testicles may be increased or diminished; and nothing is so prejudicial to its power as its too frequent expulsion. Thus we seldom find a man who performs the sexual act oftener than once or twice a week have family; and this fact we can readily understand, if we recollect the doctrines of physiology.

The fluid must be first secreted and next collected in the seminal vesicles for some time, where its thinner parts are absorbed, before it is fit for its functions. Hence the sudden secretion and sudden expulsion of it are injurious to the laws of the economy. This accounts for the sterility of strong and healthy young married persons, many cases of which have fallen under my own observation. But as soon as such persons become less affectionate, and avail themselves of occasional enjoyment, fecundation will readily happen.

Again, we know that the male fluid is mixed



with that of the seminal receptacles and prostate gland during ejaculation, if already too thin, will be so diluted as to render it unprolific.

It is a strange but certain fact, as yet inexplicable by the illumination of science, that those eunuchs who have no testicles have amorous desires, and will perform the generative act. They have power of intromission and ejaculation, but the fluid expelled is merely the prostatic. Even the perversity of humanity profited by this circumstance, and women have frequently indulged their passions with such persons, in ancient Germany and Rome, because there was no fear of impregnation, or as Juvenal has it, "*quod abortivo non est opus.*" Cannot we reproach the women of the present age with something analogous, when we recollect the barbarous precautions proposed by the disciples of Malthus and the French, to frustrate the end of marriage. The brutal proposition of the enemies of population in this country, which was propagated by a wretch upon whom legal vengeance has justly fallen, cannot defeat generation.

Zacchias maintained that marriage ought to be permitted to eunuchs, as its whole end is not for propagation, but for mutual attention and comfort. And may we not contend it is as proper for such

persons as for those impotent old men who embrace it on the brink of the grave.

Sir A. Cooper removed the testicle from a man on whom he had performed a similar operation sometime previously, and this man had erections and emissions, accompanied by the usual sensation, for some months afterwards. (Work on Diseases of the Testis, 1830.)

The sultans seem good physiologists for they cause the whole external male appendages to be removed prior to the admission of eunuchs into their harems. This cruel and odious operation is fatal to every fourth person.

With respect to sterility in females, we are told by medical authorities there are thirty women in this condition to one man, and this on account of the complication of the sexual organs of the former. I have already endeavoured to prove that this is a false theory.

When the physical causes of impotence do not exist in the external organs of the male, we should recollect the many internal causes which may account for this condition. Thus the diseases of the vasa deferentia, the pressure of tumours of other parts on their ducts, on the vesiculæ seminales, the diseases of these receptacles, hydatids, tumours, scirrhus, cancer, &c., the diseases of the prostate



gland, enlargement, calculus, fungus, &c., the diseases about the neck of the bladder and seminal ducts, the calculus of the latter, tumours, &c., presence of stricture at the neck of the bladder and in the urethra, diseases that are described in many systematic works on surgery, but much more minutely in monographs on the respective organs. There are some physical and many moral differences between prolific and sterile individuals. We find the latter distinguished by effeminacy, paleness, flaccidity of the flesh, deficiency of beard, the hairs thin and lank on every part of the body, especially about the genitals, and the virile member is remarkable for its exiguity or smallness; the voice is sharp and feminine, and never developes, as in strong and vigorous individuals. It is also said such persons are pusillanimous, deceitful, and perfidious; but this does not apply to persons emasculated after puberty. I mentioned how the testicles may be retained in the abdomen, but not produce impotence. Bayle mentions a strange case of this kind, which occurred in 1600. A female obtained a divorce before the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, but the husband alleged he was capable of discharging his nuptial duties, and as a positive proof he proposed to perform his operations before the Chamber. The lady's modesty was shocked at the proposal,

and she fascinatingly replied, "Messieurs, vous savez très-bien, que les testicules sont nécessaires pour ejaculer."—"Gentlemen, you well know that testicles are necessary for ejaculation." She obtained a divorce. Even in 1665 the law of France required both testicles to be in the scrotum for the validity of marriage.

Rolfink relates a case of a man whose testicles had never descended into the scrotum, and who was a great votary to Venus, and a great favourite with the other sex, as they feared no unpleasant consequences from connexion with him. After death the testicles were found at the abdominal rings. (De Part. Genit., part i. c. 5.)

*Sterility in Females.*—We should consider the causes which impede impregnation, those which destroy conception the first few days after impregnation, the causes which prevent some women from ever having children, and those which induce abortion, or the premature expulsion of the offspring. The whole of these causes may be referred to three: 1st, those depending on the organs which receive the male fluid, as the vagina and uterus; 2d, the diseases of the organs which further transmit it to the ovaries, as the fallopian tubes; and 3d, the diseases of the ovaries. We have already considered the absence and diseases of these parts, as well as



their excess or defect of function. In fact, all the morbid growths of these organs are causes of sterility. Fluor albus is the most frequent cause of the disease under consideration, as the male fluid is too much diluted after its effusion, and also is seldom retained, the retentive faculty of the vagina and uterus being lost. I have known this occur to the finest young lady I have ever beheld. Gonorrhœa acts in the same manner, as also hydatids, in fact, all secretions which inundate the genital organs and render them unfit to receive the principle of life communicated during the generative act. Too frequent coition is the common cause of fluor albus, or rather of an increased mucus vaginal discharge; and hence we seldom observe prostitutes have offspring. All acute diseases of the genital organs render the other sex barren, and most of the chronic maladies produce the same effect. Again, certain changes of the position of the uterus impede conception, as hernia, inversion, antiversion, retroversion, lateral obliquity, and renversement, or turning inside out of the organ. In all such cases the os uteri will not be presented to the penis; but I am strongly disposed to think that this is not the real cause of sterility, but the disorder of function, the pain, and often the disorganization going on in the genital parts, as the prevailing theory of concep-

tion now obtains, that absorption of the semen from the vaginal surface is the true cause of fecundation. The slightest penetration or intromission is sufficient for generation.

But there may be an inertness and frigidity in the uterus, and a total disrelish for the procreative act, even by well-formed, interesting, and lovely women. I have been consulted in four remarkable cases of this description, and in all the subjects were excessively vain of their personal appearance, and fond of admiration, and having the strongest passion for dress and shew, but a complete frigidity to venereal enjoyments. They would talk most ardently of dress during the conjugal act, and suffered it without the smallest enjoyment.

Fine women are generally fond of admiration and dress, and seldom possess that desire so natural and common to the sex. Corpulent females have also this inertness of the uterus, and seldom bear children. Impuberty is a cause of sterility; although impregnation has happened prior to the appearance of menstruation. This is an exception, however, to the general rule.

On the other hand, too much activity in the uterus is a preventive to generation. Thus excessive irritability, too ardent for enjoyment, will derange the uterine functions; and hence our Galli-



can neighbours assure us that spasmodic contraction of the uterus will prevent the reception of the semen. But here I may remark, that in most cases there are no particular sensations experienced by the female at the time of conception; and thus we can readily understand why so many of them mistake their reckoning, that is, the period of pregnancy, which they often do, to the extent of one or two months.

The absence or obliteration of the uterine tubes, or the attachment of their extremities to the uterus, is said to be a complete barrier to conception, examples of which I have observed; but this is a mere assumption, and requires further observation to confirm its stability.

The ovaries secrete a fluid necessary to conception, and therefore the old opinion that females produced semen, is not so absurd as might be imagined. These organs may be affected with enlargement, scirrhus, cancer, and encysted dropsy, atrophied, or hypertrophied, as already described, and becomes useless.

Again, we are informed by Skenckius, that a Greek, being irritated at the prostitution of his daughter, removed the ovaries by the operation of spaying, by cutting through the abdomen. Women thus treated are said to lose all the moral and physi-

cal feelings of the sex, and assume those of the male; the voice becomes hoarse, beard appears, the mammæ become effaced, and even they have desire for their own sex. It is also well known that females of inferior animals assume the character of the male when the ovaries have been removed.

*Treatment of Sterility in Women.*—If sterility depends on the internal diseases of the genital organs of either sex, it cannot be cured, because during life it is impossible to ascertain the cause, or even apply proper remedies. Thus the uterus, tubes, and ovaries may be wanting, or so diseased that no remedy can be of use. Again, if the seminal vesicles or their tubes be diseased, the case is hopeless. When a frigid temperament is the cause, we should have recourse to those means of exciting love which nature and instinct teach the sexes.

The general health must be first attended to, and then that diet and medicine employed which have been already described. If the simple fluor albus is the cause, and it generally is, it is to be treated as on the usual principles. When excess of irritability of the uterus is the cause, the exhibition of saline refrigerants and the injection of narcotics, as poppy, opium, and decoction of mallows, will be used with advantage. If it depends on inertness of the uterus, we have many remedies to propose, as



the aphrodisiacs already enumerated, opiates and aromatics, or injection of tinctures of assafœtida, castor, and amber, into the uterus; irritating pessaries are also of great efficacy, and clysters of gratiola (hedge hyssop) are so powerful as to excite temporary nymphomania. Those means are more useful than the waters of the Nile, so lauded by the Mussulmans, and absolutely imported into Toulon, by a Captain Roustan, who was assailed by numbers of females, who wished to purchase his provisions, and among the rest, "the waters of the Nile." (Dict. des Sc. Med.)

SEC. 2.—*Hygienic and Morbid Effects of Marriage.*

At the age of puberty, young persons of both sexes experience a train of new sensations wholly indefinable, which induce an imperious and irresistible desire for coition; a desire much more ungovernable in the male, so that if coition does not take place, the excessive activity of the generative organs induces unsolicited emissions of semen, especially during sleep, or the youth is misled by instinct to deliver himself up to solitary manœuvres—to onanism or pollution. This unnatural resource supplies the place of coition, and is even resorted to by the inferior animals. Nocturnal pollutions are the result of an excited imagination,

and are not injurious to health, unless of too frequent occurrence. Diurnal pollutions are highly injurious to health from the frequency of repetition. The truth of this position is manifest, if we only reflect upon the phenomena which occur at the instant of coition, when the sensitive action of the brain is carried to the highest degree of intensity. The collapse which instantly supervenes on seminal emission, extinguishes all desire of coition, in the same manner that hunger ceases after a repast. When coition is precocious, or too often repeated, it exalts excitability of the whole nervous system, and consequently of the whole body. In the midst of this excessive activity, the slightest morbid cause acts upon any of the important viscera, develops a morbid irritation, which may be followed by great prostration, convulsions, and even death, from the excited action of the brain. This is the reason why coition excites the nervous system, the organs of respiration, and circulation, expedites the flow of blood, and aggravates chronic diseases. It produces nervous excitement and consequent collapse or debility; and hence induces the diseases of debility, or as they are called the ataxic, and hence the danger of this debilitating cause to delicate persons, invalids or convalescents. It has been followed by all these accidents when too much



abused in old age, nay, it has caused sudden death. There is no acute or chronic diseases which the abuse of coition or frequent pollutions do not provoke, aggravate, or renew: the viscera of the head, chest, and abdomen are powerfully affected; diseases of the lungs and heart are developed, then those of the brain and nervous system; and, finally, those of the digestive organs, and articulations. These pathological remarks accord with the general phenomena which manifest themselves before, during, and after coition; the heart palpitates violently, its impulse is felt over the whole side of the chest, and even in the abdomen, and the action of the arteries, or, in other words, the pulse is quickened in every part of the body. We cannot conceive that this tumultuous action of the heart can be frequently repeated; without producing different diseases of its tissue, both acute and chronic, diseases which are in general irremediable. The brain is also highly excited, and reflects its action on the chest and digestive organs, and not unfrequently produces convulsive or tetanic spasms in every muscle of the body. During this time the respiration is quick, difficult, and nearly suspended at the moment of the seminal ejaculation. This violent condition in which every organ participates, is followed by a depression or collapse more or less

prolonged, or by the greatest debility. It must be manifest to every one of common comprehension, that the frequent repetition of this violent commotion must be highly injurious to the faculties of mind and body, while the physician must consider it as the cause of an immense number of formidable and incurable diseases. It has long been observed that the bad effects of copulation are not so great on the other sex. We cannot explain the causes of this difference, perhaps it is that man contributes most to the perpetuation of the species. Irritation, inflammation, and excoriation of the sexual organs may arise from excessive venery, as also leucorrhœa and urethritis, accompanied by simple gonorrhœa.

It is a physiological axiom, that when an organ is irritated or inflamed, it affects all parts which are connected with it by nerves; and hence we can readily explain how excessive action or disorder of the genital organs must affect all parts of the body, as all parts are intimately connected with each other by the cerebro-spinal system, or by nerves. In further illustration of this point, we may state, that irritation, discharges, or ulcerations of the genital mucous membrane, may be produced by diseases of remote organs, as the brain, chest, and abdomen, as described in the article *Rape* in my Midwifery.



We observe the throat, the eyes, and the joints most commonly affected by metastasis, or sudden suppression of the genital disease. Here we must recollect the change of voice at puberty, and the momentary abolition of vision during coition. Amaurosis is induced by excessive venery, as exemplified in a case already narrated. Again, the sympathy of mucous membranes is universally admitted. When the mucous membrane of the rectum is irritated by worms, there is itching of the nose; and when that of the cheeks or gums are affected by dentition, there is irritation in the genital portion of the same tissue. In cases of cynanche parotidea or mumps, when the swelling suddenly subsides, the testicles become inflamed, and hence the application of irritants to these organs for the cure of the disease. It is needless to illustrate the universal sympathy which exist between all organs in the body, there can be no dissent upon the point. From the preceding statements, the inference is manifest that coition must have the most powerful influence over the whole body, and if carried to excess is a fertile cause of an immense number of diseases. On the other hand its moderate use is necessary to the preservation of health. This is not the place to discuss its influence in a moral, religious, or philosophic point of view, but

merely as a medical topic, that is to say, as relates to hygiene and pathology, or as a means of preserving health or inducing disease.

Let us now consider the influence of continence upon health and disease. A moderate use of coition regulates the functions of the brain or nervous system, and consequently of the whole body. Absolute continence or abstinence from venery in a healthy subject much disposed to it, induces many dangerous diseases, and even death. The venereal appetite is seated in the brain, or rather in the cerebellum, and is excited by the reproductive organs, and if not indulged, becomes greater and greater, and finally ungovernable, producing satyriasis, priapism, and nymphomania, which are often instinctively obviated by masturbation. If not so obviated or by nocturnal pollutions, the morbid condition of the brain deranges the functions of the organs of sense, as vision, hearing, &c. and of thought and volition, and hence hypochondriasis, mania, monomania, apoplexy, epilepsy, convulsions, hysteria, and catalepsy, low fevers, disorders of the chest and abdomen, may be the results. But such effects are seldom seen, inasmuch as absolute continence is seldom if ever observed. It is, however, the ornament of virtuous women, and is well exemplified by the train of nervous and hysterical symptoms, which render their lives distressing and uncom-



fortable. Hysteria, in nine cases out of ten, arises from continence. (Louyer-Villermay. *Traite de Mal. Nerv.*) epilepsy arises from the same cause, (Haller, Buffon, Esquirol, Maisonneux,) and is cured by marriage, (Lauzonius,) and it is also the commonest cause of insanity; (Marc. Gall, &c.) It has been held, that on the continent are the most frequent suicides. Chaste women are most subject to diseases of the womb, (Gardien, Bayle, Marc. Dict. des Sc. Med.) and cancer of the breast and womb are most common after the climacteric period, when women become useless to the reproduction of the species (Richerand, *Nosog. Chir.* Beatty, in *Dub. Hosp. Rep.* 1830, vol. v.;) dropsy and scirrhus of the ovary arise from the same cause. (Gardien, *Sur les Acch.*)

Chaste people seldom live to old age, (Hufeland, *Art of prolonging Life*; Buffon, *Supplement to Nat. Hist.* tom. iv; Deparcieux on *Duration of Human Life*; Haygarth, *Phil. Trans.* 58; Sinclair's *Code of Health*; Fodéré, art. *Marriage*, *Dict. des Sc. Med.*) The fact may be accounted for by the following causes, by the weariness and monotony of life, by the hatred of paternity, a rite so pleasant to married persons; and by the certainty of leaving property to greedy, thankless relations, or friends. Such persons are subject to scrofulous enlargements when young, "which are cured by the general

excitation that coition occasions," (Richerand, Op. Cit.) a fact also attested by Wharton, who says, "*Juvenes cælibes strumosi fiunt: postea vero matrimonio sponte curantur.*"

The old writers considered marriage as the best means of preventing diseases which arise from suppressed perspiration, as different fevers, congestions, erysipelas, gout, rheumatism, and numerous other maladies. It has been stated by Van Swieten and many others, and observed by every attentive physician, that gouty persons are addicted to venereal pleasures, and here it appears that nature points out a remedy; and Hoffman informs us, that this disease is unknown among the Persians who obey the law of Mahomet, and consequently are not models of continence. "The natural state of man after puberty is marriage," according to Buffon; for it certainly possesses great influence on morals, on population, on health, and on disease. But granting all this, puberty is not the proper period for conjugal union, the sexual organs are not sufficiently developed, and consequently the productive fluids cannot be properly elaborated, nor possess the character of vitality. The sexes at this age would be unfit to perform the various important duties of parents; and hence the laws of this and most civilized countries have wisely prescribed a



certain age as the most proper for marriage, and the real interests of population, which is the age of twenty-one years for males, and eighteen for females. It must be admitted, that the sooner marriage is contracted after these respective periods the better both for the parties and their offspring. It removes a vast number of diseases incidental to both sexes. It is the best cure for hysteria, according to Hippocrates, Forestus, Hoffman, Reid, Boerhaave, Loyer-Villemay, Esquirol, Elliotson, and many others. It removes amenorrhœa and chlorosis, when all other remedies have failed. Another of its good effects is pregnancy, which produces the happiest changes on woman; because the determination of blood to the uterus, suspends, as if by enchantment, a great variety of diseases, by the concentration of vascular and nervous actions, which arrests irritation and morbid action in remote organs. It arrests consumption and hypochondriasis; it exempts the woman from contagious diseases; it cures chronic affections, as hysteria, chorea, epilepsy, mania, melancholy, ague, &c. affords the greatest probability of life (Hufeland, Op. Cit.) and according to Sir John Sinclair, women, though exposed to the innumerable dangers of delivery, live generally longer than those who are unmarried.

It has been urged on the other side, that preg-

nancy predisposes to a vast number of diseases, induces a host of moral and physical evils, exposes woman to much danger during, at, and after delivery. These objections can only apply to women in crowded cities, to the affluent, the subjects of luxury and effeminacy, who cannot supply their fictitious wants, control their passions, their wanderings of imaginations or excesses of various kinds, which conspire to injure or destroy the best constitution. How much more happy and fortunate are the inhabitants of the country, the poorest peasants, who experience no danger during pregnancy, or no alarm during delivery. It is known to all physicians who are versed in the records of obstetrics, that little solicitude is entertained by women in a state of natural simplicity for parturition, and this has been amply attested in my Manual of Gynæcology. It therefore follows, that pregnancy must be considered as a state highly conducive to the health and happiness of women. Nevertheless, marriage is not a universal panacea; it cannot be advised indiscriminately in all diseases, as it aggravates nearly all the numerous disorganizations of the uterus and ovaries. It ought to be interdicted when obstacles exist to its consummation in either sex. Both parties should be healthy: "for how can two individuals," says Mahon, "be united by a



contract which exposes one to great danger, and renders the other excusable in violating its condition?" (Med. Leg.)—Should either labour under any serious diseases, or bad constitution, such conditions will, in general, be aggravated; the union will be unfruitful, or the offspring will be delicate, or of short existence. It has been maintained, that persons afflicted with scrofula, epilepsy, and consumption ought not to enter into marriage; but the last disease is the only one that can be deemed hereditary, and from the evidence already adduced, the others may be cured by this change of life. Those who labour under mental imbecility or mania, or who may be descended from parents cured of these diseases, ought to be advised against conjugal union. Women who labour under spinal curvature affecting the pelvis, and inducing such deformity as must endanger the lives of themselves or their offspring, should be cautioned against entering into nuptial engagements. In all unfavourable cases, we should pronounce our opinions with great caution and reserve; we should not only possess a knowledge of our science, but also that of the human heart, and recollect that we touch a delicate cord of affection and passions, which obliges us to forget a purely physical medicine, or rather to combine it with moral medicine, this

medicine of the heart and brain, so well known to all enlightened and scientific practitioners. We have to bear in mind, the rights of nature, morals, religion, and medicine.

When we consider the influence of morals and vicious habits upon youth after the age of puberty, it is manifest that conjugal union should be effected at the time allowed by the laws, and thus the ruin of fortune and health would be frequently avoided. Debauchery and dissipation affect the offspring, and render it delicate and unhealthy. The ancient nobles of France fell into the opposite extreme, and for the extinction of their families, married their sons when children. Precocious or late marriages are injurious to reproduction.

Every disproportion in the age of the married is incompatible with a good union, old men espousing young women, and young men espousing old women. Such unions are contrary to the moral and physical states of mankind. So also when either party is unhealthy, and labours under any serious chronic disease. It is admitted by physiologists, that the genital faculties will vary according to various circumstances, as age, temperament, habit, diet, occupation, climate, and season. A few words may be said in illustration of each of these points.

When the lymphatic system predominates, the



individual is pale, of a relaxed, flabby spare habit of body, with white hair, pale round lips, large blue languishing eyes, the sanguineous vessels are not developed, the pulse is slow and feeble, the character gentle, affable, bordering on silliness; this is called the lymphatic temperament. With such subjects, there is an inertness of the genital apparatus, and they beget feeble, delicate infants.

The bilious temperament is characterized by a predominance of the vascular over the lymphatic system, a dry spare habit, brown skin tinged with yellow, black curled hair, superficial veins full and large. Such a person is much given to love and jealousy, and ought not to marry an individual of the same temperament, as their physical and moral happiness would be much endangered; but if he marries a woman of a sanguineous temperament, he will enjoy with her happiness, and a numerous posterity.

The melancholic temperament is said to depend on the abdominal viscera, and the modification of the bilious temperament. It is characterized by sadness and melancholy. Love is a means of secondary ambition with the subjects of it.

When the vascular system predominates, the individual is of the sanguineous temperament, his health is good, his pulse strong, his body symme-

trical, his hair sandy, his mind and body are vigorous, he is much addicted to venereal pleasure.

The nervous temperament is characterized by an increased susceptibility, a great vivacity in sensation, an extreme promptitude in judgment, a precipitate and inconstant determination, a vivid imagination, a fickle disposition.

This predominance of the nervous system is often united to the sanguine temperament, and then the character is impetuous, hasty, violent: a person so constituted offers the greatest persistence in his resolutions. Such persons are capable of great amorous excesses.

The muscular or athletic temperament may or may not be characterized as that which is just described. These different temperaments may be combined in various degrees, so that it is difficult to trace them in a large majority of cases. M. Halle describes a temperament, which he denominates the GENITAL, which is characterized by an excess of susceptibility of the sexual organs, by a violence of venereal appetite which constitutes an innate, imperious, and irresistible desire, associated with an intense colour of the skin, of the eyes and hair, and a peculiar odour. These men are ardent, covered with black hair, and seem only to live for the purpose of communicating their existence; the



genital force is in excess, and may be, in some measure, abated by anaphrodisiac remedies.

From what has been said in the physiological part of my work on Midwifery, it appears that age, season, and climate have great influence on reproduction. It is true that man, in a state of health, may propagate his species at all seasons, and at all times: but still it has been observed, from times immemorial, that with the majority of individuals, certain seasons of the year, and moments of the day, are more favourable than others for sensual enjoyment. Hippocrates said, *spring* was the season most favourable for conception; Pliny called it the genital season. The purity of the air, the freshness of aliment, the bracing effects of temperature, all conspire to the improvement of the functions of the body, the maintenance of health, and conservation of the species. At this season animals and vegetables reproduce, all animated nature is excited; and repeated observation has demonstrated that there are more infants born in December and January than in any of the other months. Though averse to the citation of the Sacred Writings in support of science, we may allude to the conception of the Virgin in March, and the birth of the Saviour in December. Summer is not so favourable for the exercise of the

genital functions: the excessive heat induces perspiration and debility, and enfeebles the whole body. Persons of the lymphatic temperament are more disposed to love in this than in any other season of the year.

*Autumn* is still more unfavourable to reproduction, as the functions of the body are readily deranged by the sudden vicissitudes of the atmosphere; cholera, dysentery, and ague, are suddenly produced, and it is held this season is the most inimical to the exercise of conjugal rights. *Winter*, from its coldness, is also unfavourable to reproduction: we have only to refer to the animal and vegetable kingdoms for attestation of the fact.

“Morning,” says M. Virey, “is the spring of the journey;” it is the matinal sleep, which causes voluptuous illusions; it is the morning in which all the functions of the body are renovated. “Behold the reason,” says he, “which ought to engage us to choose this time to contribute to the conservation of the species, after having contributed to the health of the individual. All the senses enjoy the plenitude of their functions during the day, and this time offers moments favourable to love.” But it must not be after a repast, as nothing deranges the functions of the stomach more than coition. The process of digestion must be finished; and this is



not completed for three or four hours after a meal. However plausible and forcible these observations appear, it must be admitted that night is as favourable as the other times of the day to amorous impulse. Allusion has been made in the course of these remarks to the ill consequences of excess of venereal pleasure; nothing, I repeat, is more injurious to the well-being of mind and body, nothing so likely to produce impotence and sterility, and want of family. Nothing more effectually preserves the conjugal union than the birth of an infant; the happiness of the parents is increased, when they see themselves revived in their infants; their mutual love receives a new impulse; the cords which bind their family connections are strengthened; little else is wanted to complete domestic happiness. Those, on the contrary, who are not blessed with children, experience daily a diminution of affection; a vague inquietude agitates them; they are sad, and anxiously seek the cause of their infecundity; apply to medical men for advice and assistance, or too often violate conjugal fidelity.

The first object of such persons should be to endeavour to discover the cause of infertility among those of impotence and sterility, many of which are curable by the remedies already described in the course of this article. They are to avoid those

obstacles to conception which have been enumerated, such as long abstinence, insufficient nutriment, excessive corporeal or mental exertion, an inactive, voluptuous life, too frequent repetition of the conjugal act, and they must use some of those aphrodisiac remedies, an account of which is to be found in this article.

They must refrain from copulation during the presence of menstruation, and employ it moderately during pregnancy, as nothing is more likely to induce abortion. They must also attend to those circumstances which are favourable to conception, as for example, 1. the use of abundant nourishment, for years of prosperity always augment the number of births; 2. the use of certain aliments, which experience has led them to discover as excitants of love, as certain foods already enumerated; certain fishes, and buckwheat, are said to render the inhabitants of Cologne prodigiously prolific; 3. change of habitation, when practicable, as residence seems to have great effect; for example, the inhabitants of Ireland have twelve or fifteen children, the Germans five or six, the French four or five, the Spaniards two or three; 4. abstinence from the conjugal act for some days; 5. and coition should take place immediately after the cessation of menstruation; this was the advice given by Fernel, the



physician to Henry III., whose queen, Catherine de Medicis, had not conceived till it was followed. It is said that the equinoxes are more favourable to conception than the solstices, and that the autumnal months are the most unfavourable for propagation. It is always to be remembered, that coition is only to take place as often as the genital organs manifest their energy, which must depend upon idiosyncrasy or peculiarity of habit, mode of life, and locality, diet, habits, and various circumstances already detailed. Finally, it cannot be prolific unless employed at the intervals of some days. I cannot conclude this article without inserting the valuable and interesting remarks on this subject by my distinguished correspondent Professor Dewees, of Philadelphia, which deserves great attention. His chapter on Marriage, in his excellent Treatise on the Physical and Medical Treatment of Children, is so replete with sound sense, and really scientific views, that I cannot refrain from quoting it in full, as it corroborates the opinions I have recorded in the preceding pages. He considers the subject of marriage under the following heads: 1. the most proper period for its consummation; 2. the constitution; 3. the disposition to disease; 4. the immediate state of health.

*Period of Life.*—It is notorious, that the development of body is successive, and requires a certain period for its completion; consequently, that certain functions cannot be performed in their best manner until the body has acquired its full development; this rule applies as well to the female as the male. It is also familiar to observation, that when any function is prematurely urged, it leads to the imperfection of the product dependant upon that function, as well as entails upon the part so exercised, debility and premature decay.

From this it will follow, that too early marriage is never to be advocated, since it will materially influence the health and well-being of offspring. This fact is no less conspicuous in the inferior animals, than it is certain in its consequences in man. We would therefore not only say that marriage should not take place until the body is healthily and completely developed, but also that there should have been, on the part of the male, the most scrupulous continency, that the great object of marriage (the propagation of healthy children) should not be defeated; this cannot be too strongly insisted upon. The female is always supposed to be so.

It would be difficult rigorously to fix the period, by years, at which the body becomes fully expanded,



since original stamina, physical and moral education, climate, mode of life, &c. will have their influence; but we may with much certainty fix it in this climate at between the twenty-third and twenty-fifth years, for the male, and from the nineteenth to the twenty-first years for the female.

We are informed by Tacitus, that the ancient Germans never married until the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth year of their age, and were as continent before that consummation as the females to whom they were united; in consequence of which they acquired a size and strength that excited the astonishment of even the Romans.

It has frequently excited the surprise, as well as provoked the reproach of foreigners, that the females in this country lose their beauty so early, especially when compared with the females of Europe, and particularly those of Great Britain. The cause of this hasty decay must be principally sought for in our very early, or rather premature marriages, but we confess that climate has also limited agency; and though we are far from discouraging early marriages, yet we are decidedly against premature ones. By early marriage we would wish to be understood such as may take place so soon as the body has received its first expansion; and that time we have just fixed, as a general rule at nineteen or

a little more, for the female, and twenty-three and a little upwards, for the male. By premature ones we mean those which happen before the system has received its ultimate development.

It will readily be seen that no precise or absolute rule, based upon the lapse of years, can be laid down, since the bodies of both males and females may be precociously expanded, or may be preternaturally retarded. In the first instance, the period we have assigned may be anticipated with safety, but in the second it would be wise to extend it. Thus, in India females become mothers oftentimes at ten, while in Lapland they rarely give evidence of womanhood until eighteen; consequently the woman of India would be on the wane did they wait for the limit at which it would be proper for a Lapland woman to marry; and the Lapland woman could not support the contingencies of marriage did she attempt to regulate it by the usage of India.

The examples of the evils resulting from precocious unions in this country are familiar to every body; they are not limited to the diminished vigour and shortened life of the male, nor to the faded beauty, the blasted health, and the premature old age of the female; for they are extended to their unhappy offspring, on whom they have perhaps entailed a diminutive stature, debility of body,



and imbecility of mind; or have handed down to them strong predisposition to consumption, rickets, scrofula, &c. It is therefore of the utmost consequence that parents do not consign their children to inevitable ill health, by consenting, or sometimes by urging them to too early marriages; and on the part of the children themselves, that they do not yield themselves up to almost inevitable destruction (especially the female,) by anticipating the eligible moment for marriage consummation.

We are, however strong advocates for early marriages (agreeably to our definition of them;) we are persuaded of the importance of both their moral and political tendency, and we think they should ever be encouraged wherever there is a rational expectation of both these great ends being answered.

The consequences of ill-assorted marriages were well known to the ancients, and were strictly forbidden by the Greek legislators; and though things have not proceeded to such lengths in this country, as to require the interference of the laws, it is nevertheless sufficiently common, to make a caution upon the point proper. Should no attention be paid to compatibility, the obvious and most desirable objects of marriage will be defeated, and one great source of health and longevity destroyed; for it is a fact, no less important than well established, that a

well regulated marriage contributes largely to these two great ends. It is declared by Hufeland, that all those who have attained great age were married even more than once, and generally at a late period of life, and that there is no instance of a bachelor attaining a great age. We may give two remarkable instances of longevity, where marriage was often repeated; one in Thomas Parr, of England, who attained to one hundred and fifty-two years, and was married several years; and the other in De Longville, of France, who lived until he was one hundred and ten years old, and married ten wives; his last he married in his ninety-ninth year, and she bore him a son when he was in his hundred and first.

It would seem to be agreeable to all observation, that better constitutions are perpetuated to offspring by men advanced in life, where the physical powers have been well preserved by moderate and proper use, than by young men who have been prodigal of them; for it is oftentimes better to be old in years than in constitution.

Though we have said that men advanced in life may have healthier offspring than the man who too early attests his prowess, or the one who has been too prodigal of his powers, we are not advocates for the union of old age to blooming youth. On the



contrary, we are entirely convinced that none so completely fulfil their duties to society as those who unite themselves so soon as the proper development of body and well-established health will justify their union. Yet we are equally persuaded of the truth of what we have just observed, namely, that a man advanced in years may have every requisite firmness of constitution to justify a union; while a young man, who may have a natural feebleness of constitution, a strong predisposition to diseases, or its actual existence, or a debility from overtaxed powers, may be altogether ineligible to it.

*Of Consumption.*—It is not alone sufficient for the best purposes of marriage that the body has received its final development, either on the part of the male or the female, since all the functions of the body may be disturbed, by either feeble organization, disease, or accident. When, then, the male or female, or either, has suffered in constitution, it is not to be expected they can impart to offspring that which they themselves do not possess. It should therefore always be a consideration in a marriage contract that both parties be of sound health and constitution.

We are aware it may be said, in many instances, that hale, healthy-looking children belong to people of feeble constitution; but we must be cautious

how we admit this, as militating against our position, since such appearances are by no means conclusive of the good health or the soundness of constitution. We have many times seen children of robust appearance from parents of feeble health; but we do not recollect a single instance where such children attained an age much beyond manhood, old age was out of the question. Indeed it would seem, in many instances, that children of such parents most frequently give an early promise of future health; but it is illusory, for it is never, or but very rarely, realized. In the early part of the lives of the children of whom we are now speaking, a rapid, but morbid, development of the body takes place, every function is inordinately performed; and when the constitution is confirmed in appearance by such a display of health, it is but hastening to decay. Let us not, then, be deceived by such appearances; and when we are making a choice for our children, let us choose such as give a rational reliance upon the soundness of their constitution.

*Predisposition to Disease.*—There are numerous diseases, or rather a disposition to them, which do not show themselves for many years after birth, or until they are called into action by some exciting cause, suddenly or gradually applied, such as gout,



madness, scrofula, consumption, &c. Those who may inherit such predispositions may for many years enjoy good health, and may not be led to suspect any cause to be lurking in their systems, which, when called into action, shall but too soon destroy such flattering expectations. It therefore becomes a point of duty in parents to investigate the tendency to hereditary complaints, before they connect their children with those who can give but a temporary security against the most painful, afflicting, irremediable, or suddenly fatal diseases.

We hold it selfish, at least, if not dishonest, for either sex to marry under such predispositions, when, from the knowledge of the disease of their forefathers, there was every reason to anticipate a perpetuation of them. Who has not witnessed the most deplorable consequences of such unions; and who, after witnessing them, would not deprecate their continuance, or further propagation? This subject is one of much importance, for some of the best interests of society are involved in it; and every one is concerned in diminishing the evils spoken of, by preventing marriages which can promise nothing but the extension of the most dreadful diseases. We have seen but too many instances of the perpetuation of each of the diseases above enumerated, not to feel interested in

arresting them, by recommending the two only means by which they can be either prevented or mitigated, namely, by judicious and well-assorted marriages, and a well-conducted physical education.

By the first means we may stop, in a great measure, the hereditary transmission of predisposition, by selecting such subjects as shall be free from constitutional taint; or at least we may diminish, by this plan, the risk of such occurrence, if we cannot ensure exemption from it. We may also do much good by preventing the union altogether of such as may have these tendencies; or diminish the evils in a degree, when no better can be done, of not admitting to this union more than one of the party who may have hereditary taints.

By the second, much may be effected by invigorating the system in general, so as to render it less susceptible to exciting causes; by attention, while conducting this education, to strengthen the particular parts which may be predisposed to disease. But of this more by and by.

*Of the Immediate State of Health.*—By the immediate or actual state of health, we would wish to be understood that condition of the system in which either of the above-named diseases is absolutely developed. It might at first sight appear



strange that we should notice this change of the system, as every one would seem to be apprized of it, and consequently the person labouring under it would not be considered eligible by any one for the married state. But this is not exactly so, as we find that every kind of artifice is resorted to, to hide their condition from those the most interested in the knowledge of it, hence the frequency of marriages under such circumstances.

Besides, it but too frequently happens, that this foreknowledge is entirely disregarded by the persons most concerned. This may arise from several causes; 1st, to a want of proper feeling for the consequences of such disease, when extended to offspring; 2d, to a hope of an escape from their consequences, as sometimes happens; 3d, to an ignorance of their nature, and of the risk of their propagation; 4th, to a disgraceful selfishness, where fortune or beauty is concerned.

In Europe they have such dread of the perpetuation of these diseases (with perhaps the exception of gout,) that the inquiry is frequently made in the higher ranks of society whether either of these diseases is actually existing, or whether the parties are liable to them by hereditary descent, before the marriage contract is signed; and we are informed, that marriages have been frequently broken off, and

even at a late period, when it was discovered, on the side of either party, that scrofula, consumption, or madness had existed, or was actually existing, in any member of the family.

It is not, however, predisposition to disease, or its actual existence, that exclusively disqualifies the parties for marriage, or that may entail feebleness of body or mind upon offspring, for there are others equally certain, though less notorious to common observation; such are the habits of general dissipation and habitual intoxication. The first appear to have most effect upon the body, the latter upon the mind; therefore a woman would not unite herself to a man who labours under either, if it be known; and the laws should protect her by granting a divorce, if it occur after.

THE END.



