

accusation which unnerves most of these sufferers. Lallemand truly remarks,—“In losing before the usual age the generative function, man loses the consciousness of the dignity of his essential character, because he feels himself fallen in importance in relation to his species. In consequence, the loss of virile power produces an effect more overpowering than that of honors, fortune, friends or relatives; even the loss of liberty, is as nothing compared to this internal and continual torture. Those who suffer from injustice or misfortune can accuse their enemies, society, chance, &c., and invent or retain the consciousness of not having deserved their lot; they have, moreover, the consolation of being able to complain, and the certainty of sympathy. But the impotent man can make a confidence of no one, he can expect sympathy from no one. His misery is of a sort which cannot even inspire pity, and his greatest anxiety is to allow no one to penetrate his dismal secret.”

Before marriage it is often very difficult for a medical man to decide whether an individual is truly impotent or not. Lallemand points out the most obvious diagnostic sign, when he says the power of easily maintaining perfect continence and entire quiescence of the sexual organs and desires are fair grounds for presuming that there is little, if any, energy in the generative system, for if the semen was retained in the vesiculae seminales, it would produce from time to time energetic, or at least perceptible effects.”

So vague a test as this should be, of course, applied with the greatest caution; for instance, a healthy man has his organs well developed, suffers only occasionally, from emissions, has never abused his sexual powers, and is subject occasionally, in the early morning, to erections; then, however constant he may be, and however easy he finds it to remain so, we may usually pronounce him potent. There are, however, other cases which do not admit of such ready solution, as the following instance shows.

A middle-aged man, with deep marks under each eye, came to ask me if he might marry. He was engaged to a person of about his own age, and they were mutually attached. He had abused himself early in life, but had never committed fornication, and having read my book, was anxious to have my sanction to his nuptials, he doubting whether he ought to marry. Emissions, I found, took place once a week, not very abundant, and there were occasional erections in the morning; but the testes were small and flaccid, although he had worn a varicocele ring; the penis was also so small, being, as my patient stated, not large even when erection took place, that all I could conscientiously do was to tell him I had serious doubts as to the propriety of his marrying, but could not say positively that he ought not to marry. Unsatisfactory as such returns must be, any thing is better than the vile act, to which some recommend such patients to try, in order to commit fornication in order to ascertain if they are competent to marry. Now, such a test is not only fallacious, but is often most dangerous. That, for instance, is more probable, than that a nervous man, who, for the first time, meets a loose woman, goes to a strange house, and is frightened by the disgrace which may attend any exposure of his folly; should find himself unable to consummate the act. The only greater misfortune that can befall him is to be dragged subsequently and consequently into the hands of quacks. If he does not

end his days in a lunatic asylum, he will be singularly fortunate.

If, however, the fact of impotence is discovered, we must push our diagnosis further, and inquire whether the impotence extends to the entire act of copulation, or only to some part of it, that is, whether the complaint does not depend upon something amiss in the acts of erection, or emission, or in the condition of the ejaculated semen, as it is most important that the surgeon, in investigating the local symptoms, should discover which of these functions is imperfectly performed.

The proper treatment is, then, no longer a problem of such extreme difficulty. When impotence is curable at all, the general rules as to the requisite treatment can be comprised in a very few words. To give the system rest; to improve the general health, so that the nervous centres shall have time, opportunity, and encouragement, to rally if it be possible;—to invigorate the muscular powers, so that both voluntary and involuntary muscles may regain their tone—are among the most important maxims to be borne in mind; at the same time it is necessary to avoid as much as possible any local or other stimuli which merely excite without strengthening. In any curable case it is probable that the nervous system has been over-excited beyond the natural limits which a phlegmatic constitution imposes. The one object is to restore the nervous power, or rather to allow it to restore itself, not to excite or exhaust it still further. The diet should, I need hardly add, be of the most wholesome and nutritious kind; but we should not forget the true old proverb,—“*Sine Cerevisia Baccho friget Venus.*”

Hitherto I have spoken of the general treatment of impotence; in other words, of the best means of improving the health. By doing this, the sexual organs will, probably, in all simple cases, become in common with other functions, equal to their duties. Some, however, not content with these simple means, have devised remedies for the purpose of stimulating the flagging powers. No doubt can exist that in certain persons, when the affection arises from some temporary cause—more especially in the timid, hypochondriacal, and those suffering from mental disquietude, the employment of stimulants may be very proper. But though this treatment is sometimes justifiable and advantageous, it is most unscientific and dangerous in other cases—particularly in those of general prostration—so to stimulate the organs as to produce emission. Here it can only aggravate the mischief; whereas, had the general health been first improved, the local disorder next relieved, and subsequently a stimulant given, we could understand the formula. Such should be the true method of affecting a cure, and I shall attempt to show, here, the principles which should guide its application. Had these principles been more generally known, many of the invalids we meet with would have been rescued from much physical and mental suffering.—*On the Reproductive Organs (to be continued.)*

HOOPING COUGH.—The last new thing for the relief of this ailment, announced in a French journal, is the inhalation of the vapors which arise from the lime used in the purification of gas. Certificates are shown by the director of the works to prove that children have been completely cured by two or three visits.—*British Medical Journal.*