QUARTERLY SUMMARY

OF THE

IMPROVEMENTS AND DISCOVERIES

IN THE

MEDICAL SCIENCES.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

1. *On the Function of the Prostate Gland.*—Dr. KRAUS, Editor of the *Vienna Medical Times*, states his belief that he has discovered some essential points relating to the function of the prostate gland, and makes some preliminary statements which he conceives will be found to deserve attention.

1. The seminal fluid, as long as it remains within the testes, vesicles, and other seminal passages, is colourless and scentless, being in appearance exactly like fresh honey while deposited in the comb; and in its reactions it is neutral.

2. Only when it has quitted the passages and arrived in the urethra does it acquire its white colour and its peculiar faint smell.

3. During its passage through the prostatic portion of the urethra, the prostate empties out its fluid, colours the semen white, and confers upon it the faculty of coagulating when exposed to the air (alkaline reaction). Semen taken from the seminal vesicles does not coagulate, but remains clear, colourless, and scentless.

4. The spermatozoa, in the absence of the prostatic fluid, cannot live in the mucous membrane of the uterus of mammalia; but with its aid they may live for a long time in the uterine mucus, often more than thirty-six hours.

I have conducted these experiments with the greatest care, and recommend their repetition, in order that the truth of my positions may be ascertained. From the above, the conclusion may be drawn that the prostatic fluid exercises an unlimited influence on the viability of the spermatozoa, sustaining it when endangered by the mucus secreted by the mucous membrane of the uterus.

This is undoubtedly the case with those species of animals which possess a prostate, and I intend next to extend my investigations to those species which are destitute of this.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Feb. 11, 1871.

2. *True Hermaphroditism in Man*, by Dr. C. L. HEPPNER, of St. Petersburg.—The name true hermaphroditism is only properly applied to such cases as present in the same person the organs both of the male and female, and from the class we must eliminate all cases in which the only peculiarity is that the organs common to both are so formed as to make it difficult from these alone to distinguish the sex. The only absolute criterion of true hermaphroditism, then, is the presence of the glands peculiar to the two sexes, the ovaries with Graafian vesicles on the one hand, and the testicles with the seminal tubules on the other. On this principle we must distinguish as spurious hermaphrodites