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A WARNING

TO

FATHERS, TEACHERS AND YOUNG MEN,

IN RELATION TO A FRUITFUL CAUSE OF
INSANITY AND OTHER SERIOUS DIS-
ORDERS OF YOUTH.

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"On what is generally reputed to be *the sin of Onan* something very pointed should be spoken. * * * * *
Elaborate treatises on the subject will never be read by those who need them most; and *anonymous pamphlets* are not likely to be regarded."—*Dr. Adam Clarke.*

"Il est triste de s'occuper des crimes de ses semblables; leur consideration afflige et humilie; il est doux d'esperer qu'on contribuera a diminuer leur frequence, et a adoncir les miseres qui en sont les suites."—*Tissot.*

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INTRODUCTION.

Many great and good men have called attention to the prevalence of the vice of masturbation—have deplored its numerous and fatal consequences and advocated the propriety of popular instruction as the most effectual means of limiting the number of victims to this destructive practice. Among these was Dr. Adam Clarke, who was esteemed alike for purity of character, holiness of life and extraordinary learning. He makes the following note in his commentaries in the 38th Chap. of Genesis. “On what is generally reputed to be the *sin of Onan*, something very pointed should be spoken : but *who* dares and will do it, and in *such language* that it may neither pollute the ear by describing the evil *as it is*, nor fail of its effect by a language so refined and so laboriously delicate as *to cover the sin* which it professes to disclose ? *Elaborate treatises* on the subject will never be read by those who need them most ; and anonymous pamphlets are not likely to be regarded.”

I have been solicited by many professional friends, who are familiar with the prevalence of the vice, and the multitude and enormity of the evils which it engenders ; and by many parents, over whose domestic circle it has cast a shadow of gloom and sadness, to attempt the execution of this task in a popular essay for the instruction of parents, guardians and teachers.

I am fully sensible of the delicacy of this subject and of

the difficulty of presenting it effectively, yet in unexceptionable terms;—I know that no one can undertake it without incurring the hazard of shocking the modest sensibilities of the public on the one hand; or on the other, of falling into a tame, spiritless and ineffective style, in which language would seem to be used for no other purpose than to conceal the meaning of the author. Hence I have shrunk from the perilous undertaking year after year still hoping that some more competent observer and more practiced writer would take up the subject and give to the guardians of youth a work, than which I know of none more important to the welfare of the rising generation, and which, if properly executed, I am persuaded cannot fail to preserve many persons from destruction of body and mind, and many families from the poignant grief which must ensue on witnessing the ruined constitutions and blasted prospects of the most promising of their children. One naturally shrinks from the sad office of animadverting on the vices of his fellow creatures; their consideration both afflicts and humiliates; but there is consolation in the sweet and cheering hope that something may be done that shall contribute to diminish their frequency, and to ameliorate the miseries which are their consequences.

Actuated by this motive and cheered by this hope, I have determined to make an effort to unveil the workings of this great vice of civilized communities.

My design is twofold: First, to point out to those who have charge of the young, the numerous sources of the evil, and the most efficient means of preventing the formation of the habit; Secondly, to present a truthful picture of the grave maladies produced by the practice, for the benefit of those who are ignorantly rushing to certain ruin, and who yet possess sufficient force of will to restrain their unhallowed passions,

and to return to the paths of purity and virtue, where alone vigor of body and mind may be preserved.

It was my first purpose to sketch merely a brief but faithful picture of the deplorable consequences of the vice as they had passed under my own observation in the large number of victims who had fallen under my charge; but I was convinced by more mature reflection, that this would not fulfil my design. The public is so little aware of the extent of the evil, and so ignorant of the variety and gravity of its consequences, as to render it necessary, in order to avoid a charge of exaggeration, to call the observations of others to the support of my own. I shall therefore, endeavour to force conviction on the minds of the most incredulous by reference to numerous authorities of the highest respectability, as to the vast prevalence of such unnatural indulgences in both sexes, and the many fatal consequences that result therefrom; and I will take the liberty of quoting many cases from others, while my own observation furnishes, in almost all instances, striking parallels.

I propose then to discuss this subject in three chapters.

In the first it is my purpose to enumerate the causes which have been known to prove efficient in inducing the habit of masturbation.

In the second chapter I will endeavor to portray the consequences of the practice.

And in the third chapter I hope to suggest some means of prevention which may prove effectual if judiciously applied by the hand of affection.

I will seek to illustrate the causes and consequences of the vice by cases, as far more impressive than any mere assertion or description which I might be able to give.

I need not say that all technicalities will be carefully avoided and that I will use as plain language as possible

consistent with a proper observance of the decencies of composition, laboring in all to pursue that just medium so fully appreciated by Dr. Clarke. I design to limit myself to a detail of facts and to avoid all speculations explanatory of the phenomena of masturbation—speculations eminently¹ proper in a professional work on this subject, but out of place in one addressed to the public. Before I enter upon the direct consideration of my subject the opinions of certain respectable persons demand some attention.

It has been questioned, even by some of those who admit that this is a common vice, and reduces many of its victims to a sad and deplorable condition—sinking them below the level of the brute creation and rendering them objects of contempt rather than of pity, whether it may properly constitute a theme for popular instruction. It has been alleged that harm may result from such publicity, inasmuch as some youths may be taught the fatal secret and be led, by curiosity, into the fatal practice. This line of argument might be pursued with equal propriety against instruction or warning in regard to any other vice. If admitted to have any force it would place the seal of condemnation upon many a vivid and eloquent portraiture of the fascinations of the intoxicating bowl. Certainly the Apostle to the Gentiles entertained no such apprehensions when he penned the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans—he surely did not fear that his striking picture and scathing denunciations of beastly vices would be calculated to extend their empire. With that boldness and vigor of language so characteristic of this great Apostle, he held up to the light of day, the horrid and unnatural crimes of the Gentiles and portrayed with a master's hand, the seductive facinations and the fearful consequences of their "vile affections." Other sacred writers joined

Paul in the use of plain and emphatic language in relation to the obscene practices of their times, and we have a right, therefore, to conclude that it was justifiable in the sight of God, and conducive to the welfare of man.

Of all the vices of mankind, masturbation is the most dangerous to the individual, and most subversive of the interests of society; and we cannot protect the individual, or society, without special and guarded instruction. Ignorance, here, is anything but bliss. The vice is practiced by many conscientious persons who believe it to be harmless until they are brought to deplore the want of information, by intense suffering, occasioned by some of the terrible maladies which it develops. There are few youths ignorant of the modes of self-abuse, but there are a multitude who are unaware of its dangers. How often I have heard from the lips of suffering victims, language similar to that uttered by one of Dr. Woodward's patients when he discovered that all the sad afflictions he had endured for years were the legitimate fruits of this practice: "*Would to God I had known what I now know when first tempted to this life, health, and soul destroying vice.*" My experience coincides so exactly with that of Dr. Woodward, whose means of observation are known to have been very extensive, that I make no apology for adopting the language he employed in commenting on this exclamation. He says: "Such is the language of almost every young man, who seeks relief from his medical adviser, from the disastrous consequences of indulgence in this evil habit. Is not this an effectual answer to the caviller who would never teach the young the danger of this vicious indulgence? I have never yet found the youth who did not commence this vice ignorant of its consequences, and even of its moral turpitude. I have

rarely found one who retained his reason, who did not abandon it on being admonished of its danger. Many an individual, when insane, has been so impressed and satisfied of its impropriety and sinfulness, as to abandon it and recover; while hundreds, on whom moral influence could make no impression, go on recklessly to ruin of body and mind. Much experience has taught me that this is an important and necessary subject of education; that information should be diffused upon it; that the young should be admonished, and the whole community enlightened, so that no one himself shall suffer, or witness the ravages of the vice upon those around him, without being able to detect it, and avoid it before it is too late. A hint from a parent who understands the case, may be sufficient. A tract extensively circulated, may do much good as a preventive, and a cure before serious injury is done to the health or intellect."

I deem it a matter of importance to secure the confidence of my reader, and I cannot hope to effect much good unless he is convinced that I am not intruding improper topics on his attention. I shall, therefore, endeavor still further to fortify myself with the opinions of others, besides those already quoted, as to the propriety of popular instruction on this delicate subject. Deslands justifies the production of such a work, for the reason that his enlarged experience enabled him to say that "of all fears that which has produced the most effect on Onanists, is the fear of disease and death." This opinion is corroborated by my own observation which leads me to doubt the efficacy of moral lectures in deterring the innocent or reclaiming the guilty. Few heed them, and a large number are driven by them into deeper solitude and more reckless indulgence. Proclaiming

the practice sinful, and coupling with it the terrors of future punishment, has not exerted that potent influence which many moralists have anticipated; while a knowledge that all the prospects in life are blasted by the shameful indulgence, and painful disease, and lingering death are the inevitable consequences, has arrested a multitude in their course. It is not easy to convince its victims that the practice is sinful, and hence the immediate consequences to health and character are much more potential than mere appeals to the religious sense. Dr. Beddoes proposes that from early years, children shall be initiated into the mysteries of connected existence, and thus "they would learn to avoid practices, and discourage feelings that often overcast the meridian of life with a cloud of misery, which neither skill or science shall be able afterwards to disperse.

Sir. William Ellis says: "However revolting to the feelings it may be to enter upon such a subject, it cannot be passed over in silence without a great violation of duty. Unhappily it has not been hitherto exhibited in the awful light in which it deserves to be shown. The worst of it is that it is seldom suspected. There are many pale faces and languid and nervous feelings attributed to other causes, when all the mischief lies here; and when it is suspected, it is so delicate and painful a subject, that it can be scarcely hinted at without a blush. It should not, however, be forgotten, that a great deal of misery in life, and insanity and premature death are often the consequences; and it, therefore, demands some sacrifice of feeling, especially from those having charge of youth; they ought to be warned, indirectly at least, of the consequences."

Dr. Prichard takes a similar view. He says: "The facts

connected with these erotics have never been fully analysed." Spurzheim maintains that the only remedy for the evils of self-abuse is "that of instructing young persons in the terrible and fatal consequences of the improper gratification of this passion, as preferable and better than keeping and permitting them to grow up in a state of ignorance, compromising, and, in the end, destroying their own bodily and mental constitutions and that of their descendants." Alluding to the disastrous consequences of this vice Fournier & Begin say: "The moralist and the legislator ought then, as well as the physician, to occupy themselves with this important matter, and seek to prevent such fatal disorders. But it is the province of the last, especially, to make known a scourge, the most dreadful, and to inculcate the means of combatting it."

The following testimony bears with it the authority of the erudite and distinguished Dr. Copland. He says: "So remarkably important are these consequences—so numerous are the ills, both of body and mind, which this disorder induces—and so certainly are these ills entailed upon the subsequent life of the person who is its subject, and upon his offspring to the third and fourth generation, if indeed he possess the power to propagate his species, even in the most imbecile form, that it becomes the duty of the medical instructor to point out its forms, relations, and consequences. The subject has been improperly neglected by both instructed writers and scientific physicians, because it is one frequently involving delicate ideas, and requiring unpleasant revelations—as the due consideration of it unveils the innate and concealed depravity of our nature. But the vice, the moral depravity of which the disorder at first consists, soon creates for itself in actual and often in-

curable, physical disease, a necessity for disclosure—a necessity which is not confined to the person concerned, but extending to his family and his offspring. This being the case with disorders and their usual consequences, which involve so extensive and important considerations, should they be relinquished by the only persons who are able to investigate them aright, and to restore the mental and physical imperfections upon which they depend, and be handed over to ignorant harpies, who prey upon the wretched sufferers, who take the utmost advantage of the fears which torment the victims; of the moral and physical debility which sinks them, and of the circumstances in which they are involved, to deceive, to plunder, and swindle them, and who have neither the knowledge nor the ability, nor even the intention to render them any aid?"

That the distinguished men, to whom I have referred and a long list of others who have spoken to the same point, have so earnestly advocated the propriety of popular instruction on this delicate subject, and insisted on admonishing the young of the danger of indulgence in solitary habits, will not surprise any one whose position has been such as to make him familiar with the evil. Their opinions are founded on grave and indisputable facts, to some of which I desire to make a brief reference.

The vast prevalence of the habit—the number of persons involved, and the fatal consequences that ensue, give to the offense an importance which it would be difficult to exaggerate. It has invaded every circle of society and is increasing with every onward step of modern civilization. I have witnessed its ravages in every grade of society, in the gentle and the sterner sex, in almost all ages of life among the opulent and poverty-stricken, the learned and

the ignorant, the professor and the pupil, and even the sacred desk has not been wholly free from its moral taint—under the influence of conscientious scruples, the virtuous have joined the vicious in unhallowed sacrifices to this deadly Moloch. I might content myself with this general declaration, drawn from a very large experience of several years, in a position where a great many subjects have naturally fallen under my observation; but inasmuch as in making similar assertions, others have been accused of exaggeration, I shall endeavor to strengthen the position by an appeal to the declarations of other observers whose opinions will not be questioned by any one acquainted with their reputation for ability, and whose truthfulness is sustained by the concurrent testimony of a thousand other medical writers. Tissot says: "The consequences to those who indulge in excess with the opposite sex are terrible, but those of masturbation are much more so." As his experience enlarged, he declared that he felt more and more the necessity of showing young persons the horrors of the precipice over which they were voluntarily casting themselves.

Deslands declares that "The number of men addicted to this vice from early childhood is immense; for we do not know a greater scourge than this social crime."

Revielle Parise says: "In my opinion neither the plague, nor war, nor small-pox, nor similar diseases have produced results so disastrous to humanity, as the pernicious habit of Onanism; it is the destroying element of civilized societies, which is constantly in action, and gradually undermines the health of a nation." Hufeland is of opinion that; "Of all the means of hastening death, with which I am acquainted, there are none so highly destructive, and in which every baneful property is so much united as in self-abuse.

To the same point we have the testimony of Dr. Williamson, editor of "Tourtelle on the principles of health." He says: "Onanism is a vice which is not peculiar to either sex, but common to both, and has, perhaps, more votaries than that of any other vice in which mankind indulge; and it is certainly one of the deepest die." Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentaries already referred to, sketches a horrifying picture of the terrible evils of Onanism. I cannot resist the temptation to quote the entire paragraph, although it is only in part applicable to the point now before us. I do so because the author speaks as a practical man, and founds the sketch on his own observation, and because of the great weight which his name carries with it. He says: "The sin of *self-pollution*, which is generally considered to be that of Onan, is one of the most destructive evils ever practiced by fallen man. In many respects it is several degrees worse than common whoredom, and has in its train more awful consequences, though practiced by numbers who would shudder at the thought of criminal connection with a prostitute. It excites the powers of nature to *undue action*, and produces *violent secretions* which necessarily and speedily *exhaust the vital principle and energy*; hence the muscles become flaccid and feeble, the tone and natural action of the nerves relaxed and impeded; the understanding confused, the memory oblivious, the judgment perverted, the will indeterminate, and wholly without energy to resist; the eyes appear languishing and without expression, and the countenance vacant. The *appetite ceases*, for the stomach is incapable of performing its proper office, *nutrition fails*, tremors, fears and terrors are generated and thus the wretched victim drags out a most miserable existence, until SUPERANNUATED, even before he had time to arrive at man's

estate, with a mind often debilitated even to a state of idiotism, his worthless body tumbles into the grave, and his guilty soul, (guilty of self-murder) is hurried into the presence of its awful judge! Reader, this is no caricature, nor are the colorings overcharged in the shocking picture. Worse woes than my pen can relate, I have witnessed in those addicted to this fascinating, unnatural and most destructive of crimes."

I have already said that many persons indulge in this vice, ignorant of the variety and gravity of its consequences. That many of these would flee the deadly sin under the influence of proper instruction is a further evidence of the propriety of bringing the subject to the knowledge of the public. I have treated a great number of cases of insanity, in the most hopeless and disgusting forms—also chorea, epilepsy, neuralgia, dyspepsia, paralysis, spermatorrhœa, consumption, etc., all induced and depending alone on the exhausting influence of this detestable practice. The worst of it was, that in many of these cases the cause had eluded the detection of the friends and physicians, and was unsuspected by the sufferer who patiently submitted to be dosed with physic day after day while he was surely sinking into a miserable and untimely grave. The indications doubtless appeared to be plain and unmistakable, and hence the medical adviser may have been surprised that his remedies exerted no influence, nor for a moment arrested the progress of the disorder. How could it have been otherwise, while there was an undiscovered and constant drain upon the system, sapping the very foundations of health and life? Many, even, reputable physicians, seem to be unaware of the prevalence and destructive consequences of this vice. Dr. Woodward saw "a prescription from a physician of some

reputation, in a case of spontaneous emissions of semen, in which he directs *that the patient practice it twice a week as a means of cure!*" Happily the patient had discovered the cause of his affliction, although the physician had failed to recognise it, and he had the courage to abstain from a practice which he well knew had brought the disease upon him. I have met with several similar cases; one of them, from a distant county, was brought to me by his father within the last few weeks.

Another reason for the zealous diffusion of knowledge on this subject, is the fact that a large proportion of victims is made up of the young who yet have peculiar claims to the support and guidance of others. True, some votaries may be found at all ages of life—some even whose heads are already blossoming for the grave, but it is chiefly the youthful, and not unfrequently those who are most promising in early life, who yield themselves willing captives to this seductive folly. This is the period of life when the growth of the body is most rapid—the intellectual powers are being developed—the functions established, and when, of course, most harm must result from any cause which is calculated to arrest the ordinary course of nature. It is to be regretted that the early age at which this vicious habit may be acquired is ignored by many of the most intelligent members of the medical profession, and, of course by the public. The best instructed parents do not fear it until about the period of puberty. In the language of Lallemand: "This is a fatal error, against which it is necessary to be on our guard." I shall have occasion, hereafter, to show that the venereal sense may be prematurely developed, even in children yet in the nurse's arms. This fact alone being established, no one can doubt the propriety of arous-

ing the attention of parents and of putting them on their guard against so deadly an evil.

The facility with which the formation of this vicious habit may be prevented in many cases when the parent or guardian is well instructed in regard to the causes which promote it, the symptoms which indicate its existence in the earlier stages, and the difficulty, and, after a certain stage, the impossibility of effecting a cure, should make all who have charge of children, anxious for all the light that can be thrown on this delicate subject; and I know of no means of imparting this information generally, except by some such publication as that which I propose.

The rapid spread of the vice in modern times, calls for some check. The practice was not unknown to the ancients and it is probable that its malign influence has been felt to some extent in every age of the world and in almost every form of society. Galen asserts that Diogenes, the Cynic, was its victim, and we are prepared to credit the statement in view of the history which has come down to us, of that remarkable man. His excessive austerity and moroseness, his ill tempered petulance and scorn of man; his mad pranks of rolling in the hot sand in summer, and embracing statues all covered with snow in winter; his sleeping in porticoes or the streets, and finally taking up his abode in a tub, indicate insanity of the character which one would expect in a masturbator. Doubtless the evil existed in his day, but it is far more prevalent now than then—the stream of pollution is daily growing deeper and wider, and gathering more force as it descends from generation to generation. The guilty do not suffer alone—the innocent progeny of debased humanity feel the sting and crawl through a brief existence, bereft of all those manly quali-

ties of body and mind which ennoble and adorn our nature. Who will say that, because it is a delicate and disgusting task, no effort should be made to dry up this stream of corruption and to destroy the monster whose deadly venom is striking deep into the elements of society?

It should be considered, also, that this vice is a secret and solitary one, and does not require the concurrence of others; hence it is not easy to discover it in its earlier stages, and even then, extraordinary means are required to arrest it. The difficulties augment at a later period, and ultimately its consequences become irremediable. It is, then, manifestly proper to give such instruction to parents, guardians, and teachers as will enable them to preserve the purity of those committed to their charge, to recognize the earliest manifestations of the vicious indulgence, when preventive means have failed; and to warn those who have already entered upon their career of folly of the sad results of such a course.

In conclusion I refer the reader to the chapter on the causes of masturbation, where he will find ample proof that many cases have resulted from apparently trifling circumstances—neglected simply because they seemed of no import, when a well instructed parent would have discovered the distant evil and warded off the destroying malady without the slightest difficulty. The chapter on the consequences of the vice will afford melancholy evidence of the uncertainty of restoration, when one has been a victim to the folly for any considerable period of time, while the wards of any lunatic asylum will present living instances of those who are hopeless, senseless, and wretched objects of loathing and disgust to all who behold them.

In the following chapters I have given many cases for

the purpose of illustration and extracted several from the works of other observers. The latter are embraced within quotation marks and have the authority of such authors as Tissot, Deslands, Biette, Federigo, Lallemand, Drs. Woodward, Copland, Bell, Hoffman, Goupil, Halle, Chaussier, Zimmerman. This general acknowledgment is made here to avoid the necessity of frequent reference in the body of the work, and to give assurance to my readers that I have availed myself of no cases from any doubtful authority, but have selected my witnesses from among authors of the highest respectability known to the medical profession. Incredulity could not go further than to discredit the truth of these facts or to question the deductions which they warrant.

CHAPTER I.

CAUSES OF MASTURBATION.

Among the causes of self-abuse we cannot fail to recognise the impulses of nature. Of all the passions which subjugate human reason the sexual is, doubtless, the most irresistible in its attacks, the most insidious in its progress, and the most powerful in its effects. Ambition, pride, self-love, parental and filial affection cannot enter into competition with it: it resists them all, conquers them, and has frequently made a sacrifice of friendship and brotherly love.

It cannot be necessary to say any thing to prove the powerful influence of this passion when active—when heart and soul and sense are absorbed, and every other interest is forgotten—wealth pride, character, and

even life itself, are held as naught. But it may be well to say something of the influence of the venereal organs on the general development of the body and mind, as this will afford a satisfactory explanation of the fact, that an abuse of the passion is so much more deleterious to those who call it into play, before the system has attained maturity. Illustrations have been drawn in comparing the mental and physical development of persons born without sex, with ordinary persons, but these are merely monstrosities and it is at least questionable how far we have a right to attribute their peculiarities to an apparent absence of the sexual organs; there may be, and probably there are other defects equally potent though less apparent. We need no doubtful illustrations on this subject. Eunuchs furnish ample evidence of the influence of these organs and the peculiarities presented by them, the arrest of development and striking intellectual and moral qualities, cannot be ascribed to any other cause than the mutilation to which they have been subjected. It has

been truly said, that in mutilating the eunuch the operator has mutilated his heart, his senses and his mind.

Physical defects are always more or less marked in the eunuch; he is of small stature, the bones vary in size and form from the normal standard, the development of the tissues is defective, and some, as the beard, fail altogether, the larynx remains as in childhood and gives that peculiar voice which characterises these mutilated beings. There is no part of the system which does not feel the loss of the sexual organs.

A distinguished author gives the following brief but truthful and graphic description of the characteristics of these imperfect beings.

“Consider the eunuch in his life of relation; look in him for the thought, activity and sensibility of the man. In these respects also how much he is deficient; he is inactive, indifferent and destitute of energy. The lymphatic temperament is marked in him by his insensibility, his apathy, no less than by the delicacy of his flesh, and the

whiteness of his skin. He has preserved from infancy the disposition given by feebleness, to be excited by the least cause; hence he is timid, pusillanimous and cowardly. Devoid of any internal feeling which renders the soul gay, he is morose and wearisome. He is destitute of those feelings which attach man to man and render one capable of attachment, love, and devotion. He lives, he vegetates only for himself, he is a perfect egotist; if he has any sentiments they are those of envy or hatred—in fact they are repulsive sentiments; but most frequently he has none or they are very slight. The crimes of the eunuch come in fact less from the sentiments he has, than from those he has not. His mind like his body and heart is a perfect waste. His intelligence is moderate and he is never known to conceive or execute great ideas. This picture is not drawn from the imagination, it is the result of long continued observations, at all periods, in all places, and upon all kinds of eunuchs."

Such is the effect of mutilating the infant; the loss of no other part of the body, con-

sistent with the preservation of life, exerts such an influence. While the mutilation of the sexual organs of the male renders him effeminate and imbecile, a like cause renders the female more masculine, with similar changes of sentiments and manners. Every lovable quality is lost; no softness of manner, no grace of movement, no fascinations remain; they are incapable of inspiring any other sentiments than those of loathing and disgust.

If the sexual organs exert such remarkable influences while in a dormant state, before they have been called into play, how much more powerful they must become when in a state of activity. At the age of puberty this change takes place, dormant, heretofore, if by unnatural means their development has not been prematurely hastened, they, now make themselves to be felt with almost irresistible vigor. Mental and physical changes are then very notable and remarkable—the body grows rapidly, the beard appears, the voice alters, the mind expands, the disposition, manners and pur-

poses present quite a contrast with those of the past. Puerile pursuits are less pleasing and the attributes of man mark the maturity of this hitherto dormant sense. It has done its silent work and now becomes active. This is a period of great danger and now very slight circumstances may lead to irretrievable ruin. Of course there is a very great difference in the strength and intensity of development. With some youths, it has an inconceivable intensity, the whole system is in a high state of excitement, the face is flushed, the temper quick, the circulation is active, it seems as if fire coursed through the veins and would consume its victim. On the other hand, there are those who appear to be as cold and frigid as ice. The danger to the former is very great and a strict surveillance should gently guide them through the midst of unknown dangers. Abstinence with these, constitutes the highest virtue, while with the less ardent it does not cost an effort.

There is perhaps no cause more likely to lead to this vice, whatever other causes may

do, than an idle and inactive life. Such statistics as we have been able to gather, and my own observations, lead inevitably to this conclusion. Sedentary pursuits always furnish a large proportion of victims. It is a mistaken kindness therefore to rear children in idleness and luxury—it is a mental and physical evil of the most serious character. Labor or active exercise is indispensable to vigor and virtuous manhood.

There are also other evils usually connected with this easy life, such as high living, stimulating food, downy beds, and by far too much time spent in the latter. Morning hours passed in those curses of the nursery, feather beds, have proved the ruin of many a promising boy. Not unfrequently these pampered children are reluctant to arise from bed even to relieve an overloaded bladder. In their efforts to avoid soiling the bed, the organ, already in a state of erection, is compressed between the thighs or by the hand; which are circumstances well calculated to bring on a crisis and to precipitate the poor child into the fatal habit of self-indulgence.

It is well ascertained that children who are indulged in the use of spirits, wine, strong coffee or tea, or a full flesh diet, especially if highly seasoned, always exhibit precocious propensity to sexual gratifications.

Some of the causes of self-abuse may be brought into action at a very early period of life, long before the poor victim is capable of comprehending the evils of indulging in the horrid practice. A certain number of children are precocious; they manifest furious animal appetites in the first years of life, and will require extraordinary care to save them from the curse which usually follows such unwonted passion. But, aside from any such precocious development, children yet at the breast have had all the terrible consequences of masturbation brought upon them by the imprudent or vicious acts of those to whose charge they were confided. I know that this seems almost incredible, but it is true; and a great many cases observed by competent and reliable men, may be adduced in proof.

It is true that, generally, the vice is prompted in the beginning by the venereal sense, after the age of puberty; but it is equally true that this sense may be aroused even in the infant, and the whole nervous system become deranged by inordinate excitement long before the ordinary period of maturity. It should be known that emission is not absolutely necessary to the production of the disorders resulting from self-abuse;—none occurs with very young children, yet the evils of masturbation with them are far greater than when the habit is contracted after maturity. The effects on the nervous system, and on the development of both body and mind, are disastrous in the extreme, and the child falls to a lower level than he would have reached had he been mutilated in early life. The following cases will render it obvious that mothers cannot be too careful in observing the means resorted to by experienced nurses in quieting their children.

“I saw one unfortunate child, which, while at the breast, nearly fell a victim to

the stupidity of its nurse. She had remarked, that handling the genital organs appeased its cries, and induced sleep more easily than any other means, and she repeated these manœuvres without noticing that the sleep was preceeded by spasmodic movements. These increased and took on a convulsive character, and the child was losing flesh rapidly, and becoming daily more irritable, when I was consulted. At first I attributed the disorder to worms, teething, etc., but my attention being attracted by certain signs, I examined the genital organs, and found the penis erect. I was soon told all, for the nurse had no idea she was doing wrong. It was necessary to dismiss her, for her presence alone sufficed to recall to the child's memory sensations which had already become a habit. Time and strict watching were required before these early impressions were effaced."

"A little boy, only eighteen months old, who had been put out to nurse, returned home with the habit of masturbation. At first his parents thought but little of this;

but when two years old, he was affected with an epileptic form of disease, characterized by loss of consciousness, convulsions of the muscles of the face and eyes, stiffness of the limbs and sometimes he fell down. These fits becoming more and more frequent, Dr. Goupil was consulted. The patient was now three years and a half old, and still continued his bad habit. He was constantly sad, morose, and stupid. After some time the cause was discovered and under judicious treatment the habit was interrupted, and the child was restored to good health and little of its effects remained except a defective memory."

"Mademoiselle C., ten years old, of strong constitution and good muscular developments, had been addicted to Onanism since she was two years old. *She was taught it by her nurse*, who remarked that she was quieted when crying, by titillating the clitoris, in which she was soon imitated by the patient. The habit finally caused great moral and physical degeneration. At first the cause of her wasting away was unknown;

but when it was discovered, the parents tried every mode to break her of it. Their vigilance was in vain—she still continued it.” Under medical supervision she ultimately recovered.

Prof. Halle, in his lectures on hygiene, used to relate many such cases and Chaussier too, told Deslands of several which had fallen under his notice; and both these observers expressed the opinion that similar cases are much less rare than is generally considered. Many a promising child has become the victim of disease, of nervous tremors, of spasms, of wasting and the like, from this cause without the slightest suspicion of the source of the malady.

Delicate, then, as our topic is, can any one doubt the propriety of giving information to parents, and of warning them of dangers to their offspring so little apprehended? I might multiply these cases from my own observation and from that of other gentlemen of the highest standing in the profession; but I hope enough has been said to awaken attention on the part of those so deeply interested.

Male domestics may become dangerous associates a little later in life and many a promising youth has been ruined by their teaching. Caution is especially demanded when a youth appears to be devoted to the servant and particularly anxious for seclusion with him, alone, beyond the observation of others.

The following case will show that even those in the highest social position are not wholly protected from this vile pollution.

“The health of a young prince was daily growing more feeble without the cause being discovered. His physician suspected him, watched and detected him in the act. He confessed his fault and said he was taught the odious art by his *valet de chambre*. The habit was so fixed and strong that the most pressing considerations, presented with the greatest force, failed to restrain him. The evil grew worse and worse, his vigor diminished daily and he was saved only by a steady watch, night and day, for a period of nine months.”

It is important to know that masturba-

tion may be induced by certain positions which children may form the habit of assuming in bed.

“E. L.—at seven years of age, was strong and healthy, but about this period he contracted the habit of lying on his belly at night. In this position the genital organs were heated during sleep, and the penis became erect, although the boy did not present the least sign of puberty. Pressure against the bed produced titillation, and induced a habit of abuse, as injurious in its effects as masturbation. The child was perfectly free from any sexual feelings, and had never been exposed to the influence of bad example; besides which, he was naturally modest and reserved. The first impression was, therefore, quite instinctive and accidental, but the habit was soon confirmed into an irresistible passion.

Between the ages of nine and eleven the child's character changed; he became restless and quarrelsome, but his intellectual faculties were active, and he was able to keep up with his companions in their

studies, and to make himself feared by them on account of his quarrelsome disposition. Between the ages of eleven and thirteen he however yielded to the practice, two or three times a night, and became idle, timid and weak; he fell behind his fellow students in his studies; and though he was easily provoked to quarrel, he found himself always beaten. On this account he sought solitude. At the age of fourteen, the habit he had contracted was temporarily broken off, by his brother's sleeping with him; but at the expiration of three months, when left to himself, he relapsed."

In many cases the evil has its origin in diseases to which both children and persons more advanced in life are exposed, as for example, disease of the bladder in either sex and uterine affections in the female. Stone in the bladder has had this fatal result; in fact any cause which attracts the attention to the genitals and leads to frequent handling of these parts is very liable to induce a habit of self-pollution.

There are still other causes which may

lead to this destructive habit before the age of puberty, but which, happily, are almost perfectly within the control of well informed parents. Every cause of irritation about the genital organs may lead to the fatal practice. Many cases have been distinctly traced to this source. The instinctive effort to obtain relief by repeated frictions, has forced the premature development of the venereal sense; pleasurable sensation once experienced, invites to oft repeated trials, until the destructive habit is established and the ignorant or neglectful parent has cause to mourn the untimely decay and death of a beloved child; or is compelled to consign the miserable object of parental affection to the wards of a lunatic asylum, entirely unconscious of the cause of the terrible calamity. Some of these causes are congenital and may be readily relieved by a simple operation.

Thus a very long prepuce or foreskin, covering and preventing the escape of sebaceous matter which is secreted beneath, has in many cases led to manœuvres, which re-

sulted in habitual masturbation. I treated a case of this sort in a boy of eight years, to whom I was first called in consequence of the prepuce having been drawn behind the glans where it acted as a ligature; the glans was enormously swollen and the pain was very great. After this accident was relieved it was ascertained that the child was a masturbator, and that the accident occurred in the midst of his wonted manœuvres. In this case the child had undoubtedly learned the destructive art in the instinctive effort to relieve the irritation of the organ by friction.

Several cases are related by Lallemand where the same cause produced involuntary emissions, and all the sad effects of masturbation, and in which relief was obtained only by circumcision.

Natural phymosis, or that condition of the organ which prevents the retraction of the prepuce, may have the same effect. "A peasant consulted me for his son, æt. 15, who for two years had experienced a constantly increasing paralysis of the lower

extremities. On his sides and loins were marks of numerous issues which had been tried during two years. Large excoriations had formed on the sacrum and trochanters.

On examining the genital organs, I noticed that the prepuce was very narrow, and on pressing it to get rid of the sebaceous matter which presented at its orifice, the penis became erect. I learned from the parents that this boy had erections at the age of eight; and that at nine years of age, he had been found attempting coitus. The boy himself admitted the itching, with which he was tormented, led him to rub the genital organs, and thus induced manœuvres which he had since continued."

These difficulties never occur with the Jews, and I cannot but agree with the distinguished Dr. Copland: "the neglect of *circumcision* in Christian countries is certainly no mean physical cause of the prevalence of this vice, and of many of the consequences which follow. The institution of this rite for the decendants of Abraham, and the faithful observance of it to the

present day not only by them, but also by the followers of Mohammed, have tended, amid many countervailing influences and persecutions, to perpetuate an enduring and healthy race; the beneficial results of circumcision being experienced not only by the individual himself, but also by his offspring, and even indirectly by the *female sex*, as may be inferred from various physiological considerations."

Aside from any unusual condition of the organs the same effect may be produced by want of cleanliness. The secretions, too long retained become the cause of most distressing pruritis; many simple and otherwise unimportant diseases lead to the same result?

Herpetic eruptions or other causes of itching about the genital organs have often led to the practice. The natural effort for relief has brought about a crisis and the same manœuvre is afterwards repeated until the habit is established and becomes a passion.

"M. R.—a student of medicine, enjoyed

good health in his childhood, but about the age of fifteen was tormented by frequent and prolonged erections. One evening, for the relief of the itching, of which the extremity of the penis was the seat, he rubbed the organ violently between his hands. This led to the establishment of masturbation as a habit, or rather as a passion, the patient practicing it sometimes as often as eight or ten times a day."

Warned of his danger he measurably corrected himself, but involuntary emissions ensued and, finally, in a most deplorable condition of body and mind, he applied for relief.

Ascarides, worms in the lower bowel, very often produce itching and lead to friction which ultimately developes the passion. Who has not seen priapism in very young children from this cause? If the cause of the irritation is not promptly removed the child may form a habit the most destructive. Lallemand has seen cases in children of from two to three years old, and remarks that their effect on the genital organs is well

known to nurses who, for this reason, often resort to domestic remedies for their removal.

I have treated quite a number of cases, the victims declaring that the practice was accidentally learned in consequence of itching about the parts and that the indulgence became a habit, simply because they were not aware that any harm could result from it. This cause has produced nymphomania in persons advanced in life, but it is most dangerous, to thoughtless childhood.

Children are often required to wear clothing which stimulates the sexual organs both by undue pressure and warmth and is thus well calculated to develop prematurely the venereal passion. I have no doubt that the same effect has been produced by the unwise practice of confining very young children, many weary hours daily to the school bench long before they are capable of fixing the attention or of acquiring any useful information from books, and when, in the order of nature, they should be permitted that freedom and activity which are essential to the perfect and healthy development of the physical system.

4

The advance of our boasted civilization and the increase of luxurious ease have brought with them another serious evil, affecting more particularly the fairer portion of mankind. I allude to the soft and heating cushions which are now in almost universal use. They are productive of many female complaints, of a most serious character, not unfrequently embittering every mature year of life.

This fact is well known to every intelligent member of the profession, but nothing has been said of their influence in producing an early developement of the venereal passion; yet there can be no doubt that this is true. They are prejudicial to almost all persons who have occasion to be seated many hours every day, but they are especially so to the young and most of all to those who may happen to be endowed with an ardent temperament.

I may as well allude here to another cause which has a tendency to promote excitement of the genital organs. I allude to flagellation. An instance is given in the con-

fessions of the celebrated J. J. Rousseau as it occurred in his own person. He was under the care of a female teacher, at the age of eight years, who, he alleges, had a mother's affection for him and exercised a mother's authority and sometimes even carried it so far as to chastise him when he deserved it. He proceeds to say: "For a long time she confined herself to threats, and this threat of punishment, so new to me, appeared to me something very dreadful. I found the reality, however, much less terrible than the anticipation, and what is still more odd, the chastisement increased my affection for her who had inflicted it. It required even the whole depth of this affection, aided by my natural gentleness to prevent me from courting by fresh offences, a return of the same treatment; for I had experienced in the smart, in the very shame, a degree of sensuality which induced greater desire than fear of experiencing a new infliction from the same hand." His teacher discovered the effect produced and afterwards prudently abstained. But it was too late.

He says. "Who would believe that this child-punishment, received at eight years old from the hand of a woman of thirty, determined my taste, my desires, my passions, my whole being for the remainder of my life, and that in a manner quite the opposite of what might naturally be expected? Thus with a most ardent, lascivious temperament, I not only passed the age of puberty without having either the desire or the conception of any sensual gratification beyond that whereof Mademoiselle Lambercier had so innocently given me the idea." He "learned that dangerous substitute which cheats nature, and saves young persons of my disposition from many disorders at the expense of health, strength, or life." In a word Rousseau became a confirmed masturbator. And here is a key to the singular traits of his character. With undoubted genius which, under other auspices, would have become one of the great lights of the world, he was restless without motive, discontented without cause, and had a moral obliquity without a parallel; he was suspicious,

melancholy and misanthropic, with perverted tastes and depraved habits, he was wholly unable to discriminate between virtue and vice; he literally gloried in his own shame, accepting as right that which others would have regarded as the highest dishonor, and lavished the most glowing eulogies on conduct which would disgrace a common courtesan. A confessed thief and destroyer of another's reputation for a crime of his own, his memory would be infamous but for the charitable belief that he was insane. At the age of sixteen he says: "I was restless, absent, dreamy. I wept and sighed and longed for a happiness whereof I had no conception, but of which, however, I felt the lack. Years had brought shame, the companion of a guilty conscience, and had so heightened my natural timidity as to render it insupportable." But this is not the place to dwell on the consequences of masturbation.

That the statement of the effect here attributed to flagellation, may not be received with incredulity I will add that its influence,

in arousing the venereal passion, has been recognised for ages and it is at this day recommended by the highest authorities as an efficient remedy for impotency. Cases precisely similar to that of Rousseau are reported by Pic de la Mirandole, Rhodoginus Serrurier and other writers. With the authority of these authors, and the open confession of Rousseau, we cannot question the efficiency of this cause.

There is, perhaps, no more fruitful source of this pernicious habit than obscene books and pictures; of which, it is to be regretted, an immense number are produced in our day and thrown into circulation by a variety of means and go to corrupt our youth and blast their prospects for life.

This is not only an individual evil; it is believed to have proved, in some instances, a national curse. The looseness of morals in some European nations is traced not without great probability, to the introduction and diffusion of obscene literature. As the dark ages passed away and learning revived "the standard reading of the educated

classes among the French was the celebrated *Roman de la Rose*, a work of remarkable talent, but, at the same time, distinguished by a cynic view of philosophy and a singular obscenity of language." This sort of literature had a long reign—it dominated over all for nearly three centuries, and did not wholly fail until near our own times. Many libraries yet contain the vulgarities of the 13th, 14th, and 15th, centuries—Rabelais, Berold de Verville, Regnier, Brantome, Boccaccio, still have readers and may be found in our public libraries, accessible to our sons and daughters. Centuries have passed away and yet these foul productions are permitted to survive and disseminate their poison through society. Their primary effect on the French was most fatal; and the general cultivation of this species of literature has entailed upon that nation moral evils which centuries will be required to remove. The rage for such books and pictures reached its acme during the revolution when a whole people were prepared to trample virtue and religion under foot,

while they bowed down before the most shameless harlots as the only divinities worthy of adoration. Some effort at suppression was finally made by the French Directory, and these books and prints were driven from the public highway to houses of ill-fame: but there they still exerted, a malignant influence to which, happily, the great Napoleon Premier was not insensible, and against which he issued a decree which confers upon him a higher and more estimable honor than any of his most brilliant victories—it was a laudable effort to redeem the moral character of his people—to elevate them in the scale of humanity.

As an evidence of the effects of this sort of literature on a whole people I need only refer to its influence on the fashions of that period. About the 13th century the toe of the shoe or boot was graced by some ornament in metal. Some one adopted an image of the sexual organs and this was not only tolerated and practiced by males, but by females also; and, in spite of royal edicts and papal bulls, the custom died out

only when it was no longer fashionable. This was not more vile and detestable than the famous *Braguette* which continued in vogue until the times of Montaigne.

Is it not to be regretted that to this day our young people must rely on this corrupted people for fashionable dress and that they always eagerly adopt whatever may purport to be Parisienne? Who but a people thus educated would think of introducing the extremes of low necked dresses, bustles and crinolines? The effects of such modes on the opposite sex, I will not discuss, nor note the criticism they naturally elicit. The society for the suppression of vice, in London has shown that the trade in obscene publications in Great Britain, is very large and is highly effective in the corruption of youth. Repressive measures have certainly narrowed the circle of its deadly influence; but no effective means for its extinction have yet been discovered.

This great evil is also rife in our own country—the city of New York being the fountain head of this stream of pollution.

There are few strangers, and especially the youthful, who are not approached with books and prints the most obscene, and many become dupes to these human sharks, who, for a few dimes, do not hesitate to corrupt the heart and poison the very sources of life.

This same species of literature may be found in the pack of almost every book peddler—their highest profits are derived from this source. Parents and teachers purchase the best and most moral volumes at moderate rates, perhaps for a less sum than they would have to pay to the regular dealer, but the profit comes from the boys in some private out of the way place. Every parent and teacher should drive these harpies from their presence at once; nor allow the slightest intercourse with their sons or students. Colleges are favorite, because profitable places of resort for these retailers of moral depravity, and their approach should be regarded as the advance of a most fiendish enemy of youthful purity. I have known many youths attribute their vicious habit of masturbation to such publications and some

have fallen by such means when they had almost reached middle life; no one is safe who permits himself to drink in the subtle poison. The instincts of our nature do not need cultivation—they are abundantly strong and any unnatural stimulation can result in nought but evil.

A. G——, of sound health and vigorous intellect, lived to the age of thirty years esteemed and respected by all who knew him. By industry, and devoted attention to business, he had risen from poverty to circumstances quite independent; and was regarded by all his acquaintances as one of the most exemplary citizens of the town in which he was engaged in business. And he deserved this regard, for he was strictly virtuous and had not been corrupted in any way. In the course of business he ultimately visited New York, and, unfortunately, he fell into the hands of one of the dealers in forbidden literature. This was all new to G., and he purchased several books, the perusal of which awakened, in all the vigor of unexhausted nature, feelings and passions diffi-

cult to control. One or two visits a year to the same city supplied fresh fuel until the fire raged in his whole system and would no longer brook control. The fatal habit, first for relief, and then as a passion, soon began to tell even on his strong frame. Changed in disposition, temper, inclination, and modes of thought, his best friends were soon driven from him on account of his disagreeable manners, as well as the vulgarity of his conversation. Many attributed this remarkable change to change of fortune—to pride and vanity, having risen from penury to fortune; and the truth was undiscovered until failing health and intellectual debility, unfitting him for business, prompted an application for medical advice. The effects of this vicious habit were sufficiently indicated, and the history of the case was soon revealed in all its melancholy details. An abandonment of the vice and the use of suitable remedies restored him to tolerable health, but he will never again enjoy the vigor of body and mind which formerly secured him perfect happiness and more than ordinary influence in society.

Besides these vile productions, which no one can peruse without a blush, there are others which lie upon our center tables, and not unfrequently accompany the youthful to their chambers to be read through the still hours of the night; they form the topics of conversation in polite society; and, yet, I deem them little if any less pernicious than those more glaring obscenities of which I have spoken. They lift the youthful mind above the realities of life, inflame the imagination, arouse the passions and cause the heart to swell with feelings and emotions not at all consistent with moral purity. Falkland and Don Juan and some of Moore's melodies, are not the less deleterious because they are the productions of genius and clothed in chaste words; it is their spirit that penetrates the heart and awakens consuming fires. Theologians have been loud and earnest in denouncing the great mass of modern novels, yet, they are scarcely aware of the magnitude of the evil they deprecate. But who takes heed how many parents, guardians and teachers slumber on,

while the venal writers of the past and the present, and a corrupt press are pouring a stream of defilement into the bosoms of those who have a right to the protection of their seniors?

I may be regarded as ultra, and my warning may be ineffective, but I will conscientiously declare that another evil taints and corrupts the best of society, and ought to meet the uncompromising opposition of every prudent parent. I allude to certain kinds of dances which bring the sexes into close embrace to execute the most voluptuous movements. It is not my design to moralise—I leave morals to appropriate teachers; but I would warn those interested, of the fatal consequences which have ensued and which, while human nature remains the same, may be anticipated in other cases. Passion aroused will seek gratification, and secure it, if not otherwise obtained, in habits utterly destructive to body and mind.

I would not be misunderstood. I think dancing, as it is usually practiced, one of the most harmless and sensible of all the

amusements of society; and it is to be regretted that odium should be brought upon it by borrowing from the most corrupt of all nations, the lascivious and demoralising dances that the French masters may be pleased to import and introduce for the eclat which they hope will be theirs.

Masturbation in one sense is a contagious vice, and the innocent are frequently contaminated by those who have long indulged in the habit. Thus a whole school or neighborhood may become infected. I have had under my charge a considerable number of persons from the same neighborhood and, in some instances, I have been able to trace the stream through successive persons back to its source. I treated a young man who was instructed in the art by his uncle and subsequently one of the young man's pupils came under my care. The fate of the uncle, I do not know but the nephew was utterly ruined—a driveling idiot is not a more hopeless and repulsive object than he was—his form was bowed down at twenty five as with extreme age—

the saliva flowed from his mouth—he was filthy in his habits—bereft of all intellect he lingered for a long time, one among the most disgusting objects bearing the form of man.

Colleges and boarding schools furnish many victims, and in some institutions the infection has been found universal. A few cases may be more impressive than the mere announcement of the fact.

“M. D——, of Philadelphia, of very robust constitution, contracted the habit of masturbation at school, when only eight years old. The first effect produced was a frequent desire to pass urine, and at twelve years of age this irritability had become so great, that he was some times unable to retain his urine a quarter of an hour.

In the beginning of May 1837 M. D——, came to Montpelier, in the following condition;—much debilitated, unsteady in his walk; easily chilled, and taking cold very quickly; wandering pains all over his body; skin dry; memory impaired; digestion difficult; extremities cold; scrotum relaxed and testicles soft, very sensitive, and often

causing a dull pain, as if they were forcibly compressed; etc.”

“Berthelot, aged 23, of lymphatic temperament, the son of robust parents, enjoyed perfect health during infancy. Between the ages of ten and fourteen he practiced masturbation frequently with the other children of the neighborhood, although he experienced little sensation, and did not pass any semen. At a later period he addicted himself to the vice as often as two or three times a day, etc.”

There are many reasons why this vice prevails to such an alarming extent in colleges and boarding schools—the ages of the pupils just arriving at puberty with all the violence of youthful passions, the absence of all stimulus to physical exercises, with many causes to arouse and excite the *natural instincts* into unwonted activity, it is not astonishing that many victims date the beginning of their excesses from this period of their lives.

Aside from the probability of their obtaining obscene books and pictures; they are

certain to find fuel to feed their passions in some of the very books they are required to study. The classics are filled with exciting and lascivious pictures, which cannot fail to act injuriously on the youthful imagination, so buoyant with fresh life and, at this age, so likely to dominate over the still immature judgement. And then no small portion of this period of life is occupied in perusing the works of modern authors, both in poetry and prose, so well calculated to stimulate the too ardent passions of youth.

Indeed almost all the causes to which we have alluded may exert their malign influences on youths at school. In the vast numbers that are constantly entering such institutions there are certain to be some already contaminated, and a single one of these may disseminate the vice among a large number. Even grave professors have been known to teach the detestable art to pupils. Ignorant of the fatal consequences that may follow they have thus sought to appease the venereal passion and, as they supposed, preserve the moral purity of those

confided to their care. It may appear incredible that educated men—grave professors should indulge in this debasing crime, yet, *I know* such persons are not always exempt; and I have attributed their folly to a want of knowledge of the serious hazard they incur in thus allowing themselves to be mastered by the ardor of their unhallowed passions.

In some cases the vile practice has followed the accidental discovery of a mode of inducing pleasurable sensations. This fact may be illustrated by a case or two as they will serve to put one on guard against any singular custom or practice which may be resorted to by children.

One of Lallemand's patients informed him that about the period of puberty, while hanging one day by the arm, he experienced an energetic erection accompanied by a pleasurable sensation and that by his effort to raise his body, he caused an abundant seminal emission. This was the first. The next day he repeated the same motions and noticed the same pleasure. From the prin-

ciples that had been early instilled into him he would have thought himself degraded by connection with a female, or by the least manual contact with his genital organs; but his conscience was quiet with regard to these practices because they had not been forbidden. He continued, therefore, to hang by the hands, from the furniture, doors, etc, without being suspected by any one, and fell by degrees into a state of debility and wasting equal to that caused by the most unbridled masturbation.

The following case will illustrate one of the causes which too often gives rise to precocious sexual appetite, and at the same time show how by accident the means of gratification may be learned.

“M. D——, the son of a distinguished physician, between five and six years of age was one day in summer in the room of a dress maker who lived in his family; this girl, thinking that she might safely put herself at her ease before such a child, threw herself on her bed, almost without clothing. The little D. had followed all her motions, and

regarded her figure with a greedy eye. * * * This girl's simple imprudence produced such an impression on the mind, that when he consulted me, forty years afterwards, he had not forgotten a single circumstance connected with it.

The continued occupation of his mind with lascivious ideas did not produce any immediate effect, but about the age of eight, the most insignificant occurrence served to turn his recollections to his destruction. Having mounted one day on one of the moveable frames which are used for brushing coats, he slid down the stem which supports the transverse bar and the friction occasioned, caused him to experience an agreeable sensation in his genital organs. He hastened to remount, and slid down in the same manner, until the repetition of these frictions produced effects which he had been far from anticipating. This discovery, added to the ideas constantly before him, gave rise to the most extraordinary abuses, and, after a time, to excessive masturbation."

It is a fatal error to suppose that very young children are not affected by exposures of person, which too often occur under the impression that no harm can result. The sexes cannot be separated too early, and the removal of boys from the beds of their nurses should take place at an earlier period than is commonly practiced. The impressions of early infancy have very often returned in maturer years and caused the ruin of those who might otherwise have escaped.

“M. A——, when a child, was remarkable for precocity of intellect; but was troubled with worms during the early part of his life. Being allowed to sleep with his governess, when about eight years of age, he remarked differences of form, which he had never before seen. His active imagination dwelt on these incessantly, and at length he fell into a state of melancholy, of which the cause was far from being suspected. At the age of thirteen a young female took advantage of him, but without permitting intromission. Shortly afterwards, when at school these circumstances constantly recurred to

his imagination, and during the night he took care to place himself as much as possible in the same position, in order to renew the same sensations. He thus contracted a habit quite as injurious as masturbation. His health became affected, even before any seminal emission had taken place; his growth was arrested; his sight, memory and intellect, became weak."

More than one of my patients have attributed their unfortunate habit to impressions received at an early age, in the domestic circle and when the actors in the scenes witnessed, had no conception that they were sowing the seeds of a terrible malady which was to tell with fatal effect on all the future of the child.

Several of the causes of masturbation already enumerated are alluded to incidentally in one of Dr. Ray's annual reports. He says; "It may be supposed that a cause depending like this, on one of the instincts of nature, has always been active, and that its agency has not been generally recognised. It was because it never received the proper

attention. But, after making every allowance, there is reason to believe that this form of disease has been increasing with all the contrivances of luxury incident to the progress of civilization. Abundance of stimulating food, allurements of dress, refinement of manners, frequent and intimate social intercourse between the sexes, and above all, a species of literature especially designed to inflame the passions and fill the mind with seductive images,—these are incidents which, whether regarded individually or collectively, have no where and at no time been so widely prevalent as in this country during the last fifty years. They constitute the origin of much of the kind of insanity we are considering, and sufficiently explain why it should be more common in American than European communities."

Although this vice is generally practiced in solitude, and the miserable actor has an instinctive idea of its infamy, numbers have sometimes associated themselves together to render homage and sacrifice to this moloch

of our times, before whom so many fine youths have fallen martyrs. In a German city an organised society of youths from fourteen to fifteen years of age was discovered, whose only bond of union was the practice of this horrible vice—they met for no other purpose and their highest boast was the extent of their powers in this debasing and destructive practice.

CHAPTER II.

CONSEQUENCES OF MASTURBATION.

We enter here upon a sad catalogue of evils—so grave and numerous as to render it exceedingly difficult to give, within a reasonable space, a general outline. There is scarcely an ailment and, save some specific forms of disease, scarcely a serious disorder which has not been observed as a direct sequence of this fell destroyer. The whole being of man feels the consequences—the whole physical, moral and intellectual powers are more or less affected—are impaired de-

stroyed or perverted. There is no immunity for any one—the practice is injurious *per se* and no one need expect to escape its pernicious consequences because some persons have *seemed* to have done so after a long period of indulgence. This immunity is only apparent—there is no such individual who enjoys the full plenitude of his powers; and any well informed and experienced practitioner will readily perceive marked traces of the ravages of the vice. I have constantly persons under treatment who are not suspected by their acquaintances; but who, nevertheless, are daily sufferers from this cause.

The picture I am about to draw is not from a single sitter, but the *resume* of a large number of cases. It should be borne in mind that different persons are very differently affected, owing to constitution, temperament, social surroundings, the age when the habit was contracted, the eagerness and frequency of the offense, etc., and these different effects will become more apparent when I come to individualize the principal

disorders which are the results of the habit. It will be perceived, however, that in most cases while a certain disorder is the predominant feature, the whole system, both mental and physical, is involved. One must not expect to find, in any single case, all the phenomena enumerated in the following summary. I have known some persons to suffer terribly in body while the mind gave little or no evidence of the injury it had sustained; in other cases the mind seemed to bear the onus of the evil, the body continuing in apparently perfect health; but I have never known a single instance in which both body and mind escaped, and generally, both are sensibly affected.

This practice is to be dreaded so much the more as it is strengthened by indulgence, and the power of resistance is weakened in a corresponding ratio. For wise purposes the propensity is one of the strongest of our nature, and in many constitutions, it requires the most vigorous exercise of the moral and intellectual powers to resist its importunities. Once indulged as a habit it domi-

ates over its victim as a resistless tyrant, and sinks him still lower and lower in the scale of humanity until, without the aid of others, and heroic and extraordinary efforts on his own part, he is bereft of every manly power—becomes the subject of the most painful and loathsome diseases, and of the deepest moral degradation. In this miserable condition he must pass through life without one single ray of hope to cheer him on the way, or to light up the gloom of death.

When the habit is contracted in infancy or during the first years of life, there is, not unfrequently, an arrest of developement accompanied with some deformity.

“I was first consulted by the parents of a young lady when she was about twelve years of age. She was then suffering from debility and slight anemia; and subsequently she was the subject of Chlorosis and tubercular consumption of which she died about the age of twenty. She had never menstruated. It was ascertained during my attendance that she had become early addicted to masturbation, she ceased to grow

at an early age, although her parents were large and strong persons."

Several idiots, mere dwarfs in stature, who were persistent masturbators, have come under my observation. That their mental imbecility and diminutive size were alike the results of their vicious practices, my information of their early history will not permit me to assert in positive terms; but I have no hesitation in declaring that I believe this was the true solution of the phenomena.

When the habit is contracted at a more advanced period of life, among the earlier phenomena is a manifest increase of appetite which often leads to the consumption of an enormous amount of food, and what is remarkable, the digestive powers seem augmented; but as a general rule, after an indefinite period, digestion is impaired and all the symptoms of dyspepsia supervene; a painful sense of weight at the pit of the stomach, fullness, pains in the abdomen, sometimes referred to some portion of the chest, oppressed breathing—evolution of

gas in the stomach and bowels, quickened pulse, flushed face, restlessness, confusion of ideas mark this period. These phenomena very often lead patients to adopt a stimulant regimen and not a few resort to the habitual use of ardent spirits and become drunkards, still further degrading themselves without relieving the suffering which prompts them to dissipation. These means only incite to greater imprudence in diet, stimulate the already irritable genital organs and induce still greater excesses.

The principal organs of the body tarry not to participate in the disorder—the liver, lungs, heart, etc., all become more or less involved—colics, cramps, etc. ensue, diarrhea and constipation alternate until, finally, in most cases, constipation becomes permanently established. These cases pass from the hands of one physician to another, and there is no end to the physic administered; fruitless efforts are made to lop off the branches while the root of the malady—the vile practices of the patient—remain undiscovered. Some address the liver as the offending

organ, others the stomach, while others content themselves with striking feeble blows at the symptom which may happen to predominate for the time. Such cases are the pests of the medical profession.

I have known persons deliver themselves to masturbation with furor and yet preserve the general appearance of health, continuing in full flesh in spite of much and serious suffering. But with the greater number, failing nutrition follows the digestive disorder and the victims become emaciated, the bones prominent, the limbs grow slim—and find some difficulty in supporting the body. The eyes are sunken, the countenance assuming a leaden or yellowish hue. Great surprise is often expressed that one who eats so heartily should appear as if half starved. This is readily accounted for. The food is imperfectly elaborated and cannot afford the usual amount of nourishment, a small portion is appropriated, and the remainder serves only to irritate the bowels, inducing pain, colic, cramp, etc.

Even slight impressions are deeply felt by

these cadavaric looking objects; they are continually complaining of cold when ordinary persons feel the temperature to be pleasant and agreeable; and, it matters not that they take extraordinary care to protect themselves from the cold, they are still uncomfortable; and their discomfort is increased, in no small degree, by their liability to profuse perspiration. This sensibility to cold and the difficulty they encounter in guarding against it, are their constant themes of conversation, if indeed they have the spirit to converse at all.

These subjects can indulge in only very gentle exercise. Any unusual effort, as in running a short distance, ascending heights or a pair of stairs, affects their respiration; panting and oppressed, they feel as if they would expire of suffocation. They are also exceedingly liable to catarrhs and coughs, and, not a few, die of organic disease of the lungs. I have known many to perish of consumption in whose families there was not the slightest taint of that malady; and they owed their melancholy fate to no other

cause than the exhaustion induced by masturbation. Other diseases of the lungs are not unfrequently observed as the consequences of this vice. In many cases there is a manifest change in the voice, showing that the vocal organs are also affected.

The heart could not fail to be seriously damaged by the oft repeated practice of an act every repetition of which stimulates it to unwonted activity—hence the disturbance of the circulation, of palpitations, irregular action, a sense of swelling, as if the organ would burst. I have seen several cases where the cardiac symptoms were so predominant as to induce physicians to pronounce the patients, the subjects of organic and necessarily fatal disease of the heart.

It is admitted by all that organic diseases of this organ are aggravated by masturbation; but some deny that it may produce them. I think it is, in some cases, the sole cause of such maladies. *A priori* we would expect this to be the case. What more likely to result than organic disease of this organ from a cause which throws it into violent

spasmodic action eight or ten times a day? And this is done by some of these moral lepers, and sometimes more frequently.

In all cases there is more or less debility, even in those who preserve *embonpoint*. The whole nervous system is deranged—the muscles are flaccid and feeble—tremors are of frequent occurrence, and I have seen two cases of chorea or St. Vitus's dance distinctly traceable to the vicious habit in young persons. Epilepsy from this cause is very common—much more so than is generally believed. Sensation is affected in various ways; partial insensibility now of one portion of the body then of another—local sensation of heat or cold are sometimes very annoying. Many patients complain of creeping sensations as of insects crawling on the person, especially on the back.

Pains in the loins are of common occurrence, and many suffer with neuralgia in various parts of the body. These pains are often mistaken for rheumatism or ordinary affections of the nerves, and subject the patient to severe treatment not at all calculated to restore health.

The senses are all perverted. The mouth is clammy, a disagreeable taste is complained of, especially in the morning. The sense of smell is dulled or becomes more acute; in the latter case the patient is greatly annoyed with intense odors which no one else perceives, or only very faintly.

The hearing is similarly involved—partial deafness is a very common consequence of the vice and some lose the power of hearing altogether. There is perhaps no more frequent symptom than a whistling or roaring sound in the ears and this is apt, ultimately, to lead to hallucinations of hearing. Unnatural acuteness of hearing produces great irritability of temper and many ebullitions of passion from slight causes, the deluded victims thinking that those about them are wilfully noisy for the purpose of provoking them; or that they are abused when no one has uttered a word. The eye becomes dull and wanting in brilliancy, all expression disappears and the sight is materially enfeebled. I believe this rarely if ever fails. A masturbator will

not look you in the eye—a single glance and the eye is cast down or turns rapidly from side to side. Whether this arises from long continued shame and mortification on account of their filthy habits or not, I cannot tell, but it is of unfailing occurrence in confirmed cases. When emaciation has made some progress the eyes are sunken and cadaverous; a leaden hue lies beneath them and aids in giving a very peculiar cast to the features. Indeed there is something so peculiar in the whole countenance of the masturbator that an experienced eye will detect the fault, and it is not in the power of the patient to conceal his vice. This peculiar expression cannot be painted in words, but once recognized it is never forgotten. The sight is variously disordered, some see double, others are annoyed with the appearance of motes or cobwebs floating before them, and many become totally blind from paralysis of the nerve. None see well and the effort to read or inspect small objects gives rise to headach, vertigo, etc. In some few cases there is increased sensibility,

to light, insomuch that the patient is compelled to confine himself in a darkened chamber.

The sleep is disturbed, broken and unrefreshing; the patient rises in the morning sluggishly and is disinclined to take exercise during the day. The sports of youth or the pursuits of mature years are alike distasteful; motionless solitude is preferred. Although the sleep is not sound yet the patient is usually drowsy and stupid.

The schoolboy dozes over his books, and the adult can scarcely sit down in silence a moment without nodding. But in process of time even disturbed slumber at night fails, and an almost unbroken vigil ensues. Agitated and miserable, desiring sleep and yet incapable of procuring it, the unhappy sufferers wander about their chambers or toss uneasily from one side of the bed to the other in ceaseless agony. Thoughts of suicide intrude upon them as the only means of escape from the misery they endure. They rise in the morning pale and haggard to pass the day in the dread of the coming night.

Very few escape headache, vertigo and other painful symptoms involving the brain. Some have a disagreeable sensation as if the brain were too small or too large for the skull, and those sensations often pass into singular hallucinations, such as will be given in the cases to be related hereafter.

Determination to the brain, accompanied with flushed face, dizziness, vertigo, noise in the ear, distressing anxiety and agitation very often occur, and sometimes the congestion reaches such a degree of intensity as to cause the patient to fall as in apoplexy. These are grave symptoms, the more so inasmuch as their cause is generally misapprehended and the very worst of all remedies, bleeding, is resorted to for relief.

The mind is always affected, sometimes slightly, but generally seriously. This is first observed in a change of character, because the moral faculties or emotions are first affected. The temper is irritable, the victims are exacting, affected by slight circumstances—easily excited to anger, and many become impatient of contradiction,

quarrelsome and resentful. Old friends mark this change of character and seek to avoid intercourse with those whose society may have been once most coveted—insanity is approaching yet none suspect it. Often the patient falls into melancholy, makes himself miserable on all occasions, is constantly distressed about his health and annoys all who will listen to him about his pains, and apprehensions; he is nervous and never fails to find cause to fear calamity in some form. He is suspicious about his best friends and often becomes violent towards them. He is a burden to himself by day and a prey to the most unfounded terror by night. Unreasonable and inconsistent, he is either deeply depressed or elated to the highest degree without sufficient cause. The intellect becomes more obviously involved, the memory evidently fails and is often almost totally destroyed. If a long question is propounded the first part is forgotten before the last is uttered; promises or engagements are forgotten the moment after they are made. Language fails them, they cannot

recall many of the simplest words of their native tongue, and hence, they are apt to contract the habit of stammering or of speaking very slowly; and perhaps this difficulty partially explains the cause of their disinclination for society and their dislike for conversation.

I have witnessed every form of insanity as the result of masturbation—the most furious mania, melancholy, dementia. The former is most rare; but it frequently alternates with great timidity and depression. Melancholy and dementia are most frequent. If the habit is contracted at an early period of life the subject becomes quite idiotic and presents the most disgusting features of the lowest debasement. I will deal more in detail on this subject after a while. In this general summary I design only an enumeration of the chief symptoms of this horrible practice.

This general picture does not give the vivid idea of the evils of the vile affection which it is my design to impress upon the minds of those having charge of the young

and of those already the unhappy victims of the vice. I intend it only as an introduction to the special study of the more important forms of disease which may be shown to be the ordinary results of the practice. These I will take up separately and having considered each of them briefly, I will relate cases observed by myself, and by others and thus leave no room to doubt the magnitude of the evil, and they will be, I hope, sufficiently potential to attract that attention which the importance of the subject demands. I am sure all must be convinced that I do not exaggerate the fatal consequences of the malady.

In many instances the vice shows itself in general ill health without inducing any specific form of disease; and, in these cases the cause is almost always overlooked by both the victim and his physician. This aspect of the malady may be best illustrated by the narration of a few cases.

P——, was a stout, healthy youth until he reached his fifteenth year. When fourteen years old he left home to enter upon a

collegiate course. Here, unfortunately, he was taught by a vicious companion the way to illegitimate pleasures, and very soon his ardent temperament led him into the greatest excesses. Before the end of the first term his health was almost completely broken up. He returned home pale, haggard, emaciated, with a trembling gait, and giving utterance to almost every imaginable complaint. There seemed to be no fixedness in his disease. The head, heart, stomach, bowels, etc. were successively the seat of intense suffering, and when one part was complained of, other organs seemed to be restored to their normal state. For days together he would eat heartily and digestion appeared to be perfect; then for weeks, however careful about his diet, indigestion tormented every hour of his existence. Diarrhea and constipation alternated, and his physician was incessantly flying from cathartics to opiates and astringents. His sight was materially affected and this was the only unchanging symptom in his case. The young man had naturally a brilliant intel-

lect and it was deplorable to witness the deep degradation he had brought upon himself,

All these serious phenomena were attributed to hard study and that much abused, but not a frequent offender, the fumes of the midnight lamp, came in for more than an ordinary share of detraction. The midnight lamp does not often injure young men, and when students become the subjects of anomalous forms of disease, ill-health, etc., it will be well to use the lamp for the purpose only of looking a little deeper for the cause of such maladies, and in a vast majority of instances this cause will be discovered to be one much more efficient in destroying the constitution, than all the devotion which the youth may manifest to his studies—even though his application is protracted to the still hours of midnight.

Such was the case with P——, who being convinced that his own vicious habits were conducting him to ruin was induced to abstain and he ultimately recovered.

“D——, aged twenty, had ill health for a

year or more; he was pale, feeble, nervous, lost his power of will, had no appetite—took to his bed much of the time, and became dull, almost speechless, and wholly abstracted and melancholy. His brother was his physician; but not ascertaining the cause of the symptoms, he gained no advantage over the disease, and the unhappy young man was constantly losing strength and flesh. After awhile he came under the care of the writer. He was in the most miserable condition conceivable; emaciated, feeble, pallid—had night sweats, diarrhea, or costiveness, total loathing of all food; his heart beat irregularly, his head was painful, and he felt no desire, and would make no effort, to live. Suspecting masturbation, I found, upon strict inquiry and watching, that my suspicions were well founded. * * * * *

After a long time he wholly recovered, and is now a healthy and valuable citizen.”

“F——, aged twenty, was a long time in the habit of masturbation. He was for years confined to the house, and much of the time to his bed. By long indulgence

the habit had become irresistable, and the consequences truly deplorable. His mind was as fickle and capricious as that of an infant, and his health wholly prostrated. For five or six years he was the most miserable being imaginable. Nocturnal pollution, spontaneous emission, and all the evils resulting from unrestrained indulgence, were presented in this truly unhappy young man. He had been apprised of the danger which the continued practice would bring upon him, and was sensible that all his trials had their origin in this vice; and yet the propensity had become so strong that he could not resist it; and if he did, the consequences had become such that little benefit was derived from his good resolution. In his intercourse with his friends he was covered with shame and confusion, and seemed to feel conscious that every individual he met knew, as well as himself, the highth and depth of his degradation. In this condition, in a fit of desperation, he attempted to emasculate himself, but succeeded in removing one testicle only. After he re-

covered from the dangerous wound which he inflicted, he began to get better; and after two years he recovered his health and spirits. He has since, at the age of forty five, *married* a very clever woman, and they live in peace and harmony."

I have a number of cases now under my care to whom the following description will apply perfectly.

"W——, a young man twenty years of age had been feeble and dejected for two years. He was pale, torpid, irresolute, and shame-faced in the extreme—so much so that I could not catch his eye during a sitting of an hour. He complained of his head, of short breathing and palpitation of his heart, and of extreme debility. His extremities, were cold and damp, his muscular system remarkably flabby, and his snail-like motions evinced great loss of muscular strength. His father, who accompanied the young man, said that he had consulted many physicians without benefit. The moment that he came into my room, I was strongly impressed that he was the victim

of this solitary vice. I questioned him sometime without ascertaining the cause of the disease. His father was wholly ignorant and the physicians had not suspected it, or inquired concerning it. I requested a private interview and told him the danger of such habits. He then acknowledged that he was in the daily practice of masturbation and had been for three years—that he often also had spontaneous emissions, etc. He had never suspected that it had any influence upon his health. This young man afterwards became insane and idiotic. He is now a most disgusting, filthy idiot, and will probably never recover.”

In the course of general practice the physician occasionally meets with mysterious bed-ridden cases, which are the source of much perplexity and annoyance. Without any distinct form of disease, or evidence of any serious lesion, the patient keeps his bed and declares himself absolutely unable to rise therefrom. In all such cases, occurring in young persons especially, attention should be directed to the habits of the sufferer and

all doubts will generally be resolved by the discovery that he is a masturbator.

Masturbation is also frequently the cause of very protracted convalescence from acute diseases and often produces relapse when there is every prospect of a speedy recovery. The hopes of the physician and friends have been thus sadly disappointed in many cases. Even sudden death has followed indulgence under such circumstances.

Happening to meet a medical friend one morning he informed me that he had just paid a visit to a young man who was recovering from a severe attack of fever—that he was upon the point of discharging him when a recurrence of formidable symptoms seemed to threaten a fatal result and gave alarm and anxiety to both himself and the friends of the patient. A thorough investigation had failed to discover any imprudence in diet, exercise or any thing else and he was sorely perplexed to account for the sudden relapse. I had been informed some time previously by a masturbating patient, that this young man habitually indulged in

the same vice and, hence, I suggested the probability that he had resumed his old habits and was suffering the consequences. My friend informed me subsequently that the young man confessed to him that he had recurred to his evil practice about forty-eight hours before the time when the physician was hastily summoned to his chamber and that he gradually became worse until his friends were alarmed about him and sent for the physician. His convalescence was protracted to an unusual extent, but he finally recovered.

INSANITY—Sir W. Ellis in alluding to the destructive consequences of self-pollution says; "Vice, in all her forms, tends to weaken the constitution, and so far as the brain participates in the general debility, to produce insanity. But there is a vice, the secret and unsuspected indulgence of which seems in addition to its weakening the general powers, to have a specific and direct tendency, in many conditions at least, to operate on the brain and nervous system. Would that I could take its melancholy

victims with me in my daily rounds, and could point out to them the awful consequences, which they do but little suspect to be the result of its indulgence. I could show them those, gifted by nature with high talents, and fitted to be an ornament and a benefit to society, sunk into such a state of moral and physical degradation as wrings the heart to witness; and still preserving, with the last remnant of mind generally sinking into fatuity, the consciousness that their hopeless wretchedness is the just reward of their own misconduct."

Dr. Ray, whose writings, and especially his great work on the Jurisprudence of Insanity, have given him a world-wide reputation says; "Without being exposed to any obvious predisposing or exciting cause of disease; at the moment even when the youth is giving the first promise for the future, a blight falls upon his mind, and after a brief period of uncertain and equivocal manifestations, he rapidly slides into a grave and hopeless insanity. Year after year, as he passes through its successive

stages, he becomes loathsome and repulsive, until, finally, every vestige of proper humanity has disappeared, and nothing but a clod of earth remains."

As I have already remarked, difference of constitution and variety of temperament cause the disturbance of the brain and nervous system, produced by this disgusting practice, to be more severely felt by some persons than by others; but none may hope to escape altogether. Epilepsy, chorea, consumption, etc., affect only a certain portion of its victims, but not a single one escapes some degree of mental disorder. It may not reach a grade entitled to the appellation of insanity—it may be that the deluded victim pursues the business of life with some degree of credit and success; but he is not and cannot be the man he would have been had he escaped the fangs of this moral monster. Memory is enfeebled—judgment is defective and the affective functions are irregularly performed. Rousseau declares that he never was able to retain even as much as two verses although his efforts to

improve his memory were extraordinary—his whole history gives evidence of imperfect judgment; and there is not in all history a more remarkable instance of perversity of moral emotions and sentiments than was exhibited by this man.

I have had no little experience with this form of disease. I have observed a very large number of cases, both in public and private practice, and no one of them has failed to give evidence of the ravages of the vice in the brain.

Aside from these minor disorders of the mind, which are not regarded as insanity, we have abundant evidence in the records of our lunatic asylums of the fatal consequences of the vile habit. The reports of these institutions furnish us some statistics on this interesting subject which cannot fail to make a profound impression on every thinking mind; and which I will sum up as best calculated to show the unappreciated importance and extent of the evil.

I will premise that so far as these figures go they are reliable—there is no motive for

misrepresentation—they are the expression of facts observed by some of the most competent and best of men; but they do not exhibit the full extent of insanity produced by this cause. It must be recollected that this is a secret vice and that its victims instinctively seek to conceal their fault. This is especially the case with one of the sexes and delicacy prevents the same course of inquiry with them as that pursued with males. Hence these statistics show a very large proportion of victims to be males. It is undoubtedly true that this obtains in fact, but not to the degree indicated by these figures. Nature has stamped more delicacy and purity on the female and given her far less of that fiery passion which assails the sterner sex; they are less exposed to the contagion of bad associates and to the operation of other causes; and, it is gratifying, to say that comparatively few fall in this way from that high estate where men love to look upon, and admire them. It is material to know however that they are not wholly exempt.

There are many other causes which ren-

der the statistics on this subject defective. The malady has not generally received that attention from medical men, which its importance demands—their attention has not been particularly directed to its frequency or to its sad effects, hence it often exists undetected. The causes of disease, when the patient has no motive for concealment, are often arrived at only after prolonged and careful analysis; and, in innumerable cases, they altogether elude the searching scrutiny of the most acute practitioners. When there is a studied effort at concealment the obstacle becomes in many cases insurmountable.

In the Reports of many of the Superintendents of lunatic asylums, where the causes of insanity are given at all, no distinct reference is made to masturbation, although there is not an institution of this kind in the world which does not contain some of its unfortunate victims. Sometimes they are included under the head of ill-health, "Vicious indulgence," "vicious habits and indulgences," and a very large number fall

into that numerous class who are represented, so far as causes are concerned, by the term "unknown."

In the statistics I am about to give all doubtful cases are excluded; I take the statements of the reporters or make up the proportions from those reported in the tables as having become insane by "Secret vice," "Masturbation," "Onanism"—these terms are unmistakable and indicate one and the same vice.

It will be perceived that these facts are not sufficiently numerous or minute for tabular statement, justifying any conclusive inference in regard to the relative frequency of insanity from this cause or the proportions of the two sexes affected. The figures are quoted for the purpose only of establishing the general fact that the vice does make fearful ravages with the nobler part of man.

The Sup't., of the Mass. Lunatic Asylum at Worcester, reported that of the whole number of admissions, 32 per cent., had become insane from the practice of self-pollution.

The reports from the same institution for 1841 and 1844 not only show a large number of victims, but tend to show the influence of *pursuit*; thus in 1841 masturbation produced insanity as follows; of 41 Shoemakers, 18 were from this cause; of 10 Printers, 9; of 29 Seamen, 2; of 39 Merchants, 18; of 25 Carpenters, 6; of 16 Students, 13.

In 1844 of 160 Farmers, this cause produced insanity in $14\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., of 91 Laborers, 14 per cent., of 46 Seaman, 11 per cent. Of 155 persons who pursued light and sedentary occupations, 50 per. cent fell victims to the "secret vice;" of 53 whose employments, were active, 13 per cent., became insane from the same cause. Seventeen professional men furnished six victims.

The report from the State Asylum at Columbus Ohio for 1841 states that 20 cases of this kind were admitted there in the course of three years.

The report of the N. York Asylum for 1851 speaks of masturbation as "a fruitful cause of insanity" and in giving statistics de-

clares that the number given is below the true figure. Of 185 males, 47, and of 182 females, 8 reduced themselves to their deplorable condition by self-abuse. The same thing was true in 1852 of 40 out of 200 males, and of 4 females of 190. In 1853 we have 56 males of 251, and 1 female of 173. In this institution during a single year 107 masturbators were under treatment—most of them males. The report from the New Hampshire Asylum gives 14 cases of insanity from this cause out of 85 persons.

Of 1343 cases treated by Dr. Choate in the course of six years, insanity was ascertained to have been produced in 87 by masturbation. Of these only 6 were females. Of the whole number the cause was "unknown" in 334, and in 228 it is said to have been "ill-health." Dr. Choate remarks; "Many of the cases classed under the head of "ill-health" might, if more completely traced to their origin, be fairly attributed to some vicious habit, as this is the foundation of most disease. Under the head of "ill-health" are class-

ed all those cases of sexual irregularity and disturbance, which, in the female, are so frequently the cause of mental disease."

In his report for 1859 the same gentleman says: Next to intemperance and physical derangement, with the latter of which causes it undoubtedly has much to do, ranks the indulgence in solitary sexual excess. The baneful effects of this habit in both sexes have been often dwelt upon, and, I believe, have not been overrated. As a cause, I fear it is a growing one, increasing with increasing luxury, and with the diffusion of precocious knowledge which marks the present day. Its influence is far greater than the preceding table would indicate. That it is the cause of many of those functional irregularities which are supposed by friends to be the original cause, cannot, I think, be doubted."

The Western Va. Asylum for 1859 reports 29 cases of insanity out of the whole number, 280 males.

Of 200 patients in the Western Ky. Asylum 1858—9, 15 male masturbators are re-

ported. Of the whole number, in more than twenty-five per cent., the cause of insanity was unknown. Dr. Ray estimates that of the whole number of admissions into the Butler Hospital more than 6 per cent, are Onanists.

Of 256 patients admitted into Charenton, the model Insane Hospital of France, 44 males and 3 females were ascertained to be masturbators.

Dr. Holst observes about the same proportion to obtain in Norway. Georget gives onanism as the cause of insanity in only 21 of 1079, of whom, however, 118 were epileptics and 69 idiots. How many of these may have been reduced to their sad condition by the vice, we cannot know. Dr. Ellinger, of Winnenthal, among 383 lunatics found 83 the victims of this vice.

My observation leads me to adopt the highest figures given above, and to declare that it is my firm conviction that truth would justify a still higher scale. I believe that Guislain's rule will not often lead astray. He says; "When mental alienation occurs

without manifest cause we should, with young people, direct our attention in an immense majority of cases, to onanism."

Ellis says; "I have no hesitation in saying, that in a very large number of patients in public asylums, the disease may be attributed to this cause."

Dr. Ray says; "It is a fact well established in this country at least, that masturbation or self-pollution is a prolific cause of mental derangement in young subjects. It deserves our especial attention for the reason, that although the intellect finally suffers deeply and rapidly, yet, in its initiating stage, the moral and affective powers may be seriously perverted, while the conduct and conversation of the individual may be outwardly marked by his usual propriety. Long before any intellectual aberration is observed and while the patient is merely moody and reserved, his mind may be tortured by fears and suspicions that mar his peace and sometimes lead him to acts of violence."

This is an important phase of the malady. I have known children severely punished

for what were supposed to be wilful moral delinquencies, when the acts were the result of mental disorder produced by this habit; and many persons have been put upon trial for crime committed under like influences. A few cases will afford the best illustration.

W—— was, from youth, disposed to solitude, almost always sullen and morose; easily excited to anger, he frequently gave way to explosions of violence, and by apparently wilful waywardness and disobedience he gave his parents much anxiety and trouble. Frequent correction seemed to exert no influence, the same fault was frequently repeated. The cause was not suspected and remained undiscovered until an act of violence brought him under my care. I will not soon forget the father's distress when he learned that he had punished as wickedness, acts, that had resulted from mental derangement, brought on by vicious indulgence.

The accomplished (late) Superintendent of the McLean Asylum, Massachusetts, knew "a pious intelligent student pursuing his

daily avocations to the satisfaction of his friends and instructors, who nightly slept with a weapon under his pillow to protect himself from an attack from one whom he had scarcely seen, and to whom he had never spoken; and when convinced of his delusion by proof so overpowering that his mind was obliged to acknowledge its assent, he merely transferred his suspicions to another equally innocent individual."

These unfounded suspicions constitute a marked characteristic of insanity from this cause; and mental derangement is often unsuspected until some desperate act is perpetrated. The poor victim may be industrious and attentive to business and even successful and pass among his acquaintances as merely eccentric until, at an unexpected moment, his friends are astounded to hear that he has committed homicide. Then his true condition flashes upon the minds of all his friends and the wonder is that his insanity had not previously been recognized.

G. H——, an unmarried man, 35 years old was attentive and successful in business as

a wagon maker and an excellent workman. His habits were very peculiar—always manifested suspicion of his best friends—believed that they sought to injure him—would allow no one to get behind him—believed that poison was clandestinely put into his drinking water or coffee or milk—the sight of a knife or gun in the hands of persons who had never had any difficulty with him excited the utmost alarm and terror. Finally he killed the gentleman with whom he boarded when no one else was present and of course the circumstances of the killing cannot be known. He was acquitted by reason of insanity, and is now an inmate of the asylum, and will probably remain so to the end of life. He is now the subject of delusions of hearing, and still manifests that suspicious disposition which was a marked feature of his character from boyhood. He labors also under various delusions and would be a dangerous member of society:

The following case, given in his own words, will further illustrate the suspicious disposition of the masturbator, and this is an

important point, as many homicides have resulted from these fancied wrongs, and it is one feature above others which requires the sequestration of those in whom it is a prominent feature. This patient contracted the habit of masturbation at the age of twelve years while at school. He writes at the age of nineteen :

“At first I felt a gradual increasing disgust of every thing and a constant sense of *ennui*. From that period I saw only the dark side of life. Thoughts of suicide soon afterwards occurred to me, and this state of mind continued for twelve months, after which other ideas took the place of those respecting suicide. I considered myself a subject of ridicule, and fancied that the expression of my countenance, or my manners, excited an insulting gait in the persons I met. This notion each day acquired new strength, and often when in the street, or even when at my own house, or in a room surrounded by my relations and friends, I fancied I heard insults which were aimed at me. *I think so still.* At length, as my state

became worse, I thought that every one insulted me, and *I still think so*. If any one expectorates or blows his nose, coughs, laughs or puts his handkerchief before his face in my presence, I experience the most painful sensation. Sometimes, I feel enraged, but more frequently a depression of spirits, ending in involuntary tears. I look at no one, and my eyes are never fixed on any object. Wrapped up in my own thoughts, I am indifferent to all external impressions. These signs are evidently those of imbecility. I admit that I may have had, and that I may even now have, *hallucinations*, but I am fully persuaded that these ideas are not without foundation; I am convinced that the expression of my countenance has something in it, that people read in my looks the fears which agitate, and the ideas which torment me, and that they laugh at this unhappy weakness of intellect, which they ought rather to pity."

Who can conceive a more pitiable state than that here exhibited? Yet this is but an example of a great number in society.

As already remarked every form of insanity may result from this vile practice, but fatuity or dementia is much the most common; and many of these cases are the most disgusting and deplorable that are to be found in the wards of lunatic asylums. My observation brings me to the conclusion, arrived at by Sir, W. Ellis, who declares that "by far the most frequent cause of fatuity is debility of the brain and nervous system, from not receiving a due proportion of blood for the carrying on their functions, in consequence of the pernicious habit of masturbation." A great deal has been said on dementia by previous writers on insanity; but this, the true cause of its origin in by far the greater number of cases, has not been mentioned"

Patients are not usually sent to asylums until this malady has made baneful progress—the first stage, when restoration is practicable, is passed; extreme debility has set in; all self-respect is annihilated; the mind is a wreck; the victims are sunk to the lowest degradation; reckless, shameless and filthy

they pass the remnant of life the most pitiable and disgusting of all living beings.

If the mind be sufficiently aroused to be impressed with a knowledge of the causes of the suffering the victims may yet be restored.

“About two years ago, a young woman aged twenty-two years, came under my care, in a state of the worst form of insanity. She was furious, noisy, filthy, apparently nearly reduced to idiocy. She had been in this condition many months, and continued so for some time while with me. She was pale and bloodless, had but little appetite, frequently rejected her food, and was reduced in flesh and strength. Finding her one day more calm than usual, I hinted to her the subject of masturbation, and informed her that if she practiced it she could not get well—if she abandoned it, she might. She did not deny the charge, and promised to follow my advice strictly. In two or three weeks from this time, she was perceptibly better; her mind improved as her health gained; and both were much better in the course of a few weeks. The recovery

was very rapid in this case. At the end of six months she had excellent health, was quite fleshy, and had become perfectly sane, and has continued so, as far as we have known, to this time."

Miss——, aged nineteen came into my hands in an apparently hopeless condition. She was perfectly stupid, did not seem to be conscious of any thing about her, she was inattentive to the calls of nature and altogether a most disgusting object. She ate ravenously, and digestion seemed to be perfectly performed, as she was in flesh and her strength well preserved. About ten days after I saw her the first time, she vomited after each meal and apparently ejected every thing she had eaten, yet, she did not lose flesh or strength although this continued for more than a week—the appetite was craving during the whole time. The vomiting ceased as suddenly as it had appeared, leaving the poor girl much less stupid, indeed she was rather sprightly and conversed on various subjects with a creditable degree of intelligence. In the course of a few months

these phenomena recurred several times until, finally, I was convinced that she was the subject of secret vice. I seized upon one of those favorable moments, when her mind was temporarily restored to some vigor and warned her of the utter ruin she was bringing upon herself, and told her, plainly the cause of her sad condition. She readily promised reformation on my assurance that if she would abstain, I would be able to relieve her of some of the consequences of the habit. She evidently struggled hard to keep her promise and, although she was overcome many times, she ultimately gained the mastery and now passes in society as a person of ordinary intellect.

Of a great many cases which I have treated I have never known one to recover whose mind was so seriously involved as this girl's. This is an exceptional case. Generally when the masturbator reaches such a point of degradation there is no room for hope; the subject sinks rapidly into the lowest state of fatuity and finds relief only in the extinction of life. Such would have

been her destiny but for those gleams of reason which occasionally occurred and enabled her to exert sufficient strength of will to control her morbid impulses.

Melancholy, in its most distressing forms, and not unfrequently leading to suicide, is a very common result of self-pollution.

E. F—— was a bright promising boy—the pride of his parents and the boast of his teachers. His superiority was admitted by his companions and up to a period approaching the completion of his collegiate course, few of them ventured to enter into competition with him. He was studious, yet, in the hours of relaxation, he was the soul and life of the joyous chums with whom he associated. His temper was mild and forbearing—his disposition noble and generous—his genial manners and good natured humor attracted a large circle of admiring friends. A brilliant and successful future was predicted for him by all. But alas he contracted the habit of self-abuse and ere long dark and portentous clouds obscured his hitherto bright horizon, destroying his peace

of mind, blasting a noble intellect and rendering him a burden to himself and friends.

He entered upon his career of folly at the age of sixteen, and before the end of one year his temper, disposition and whole course of life underwent a very remarkable change. The glow of health and vigor gave place to a pale wan countenance and a feeble, staggering gait—his appetite was capricious, his body emaciated—his mind feeble and vacillating. He became sullen and morose, sought solitude, was easily excited to anger, became haughty and imperious towards all who came in his way. He suspected all his friends of evil designs upon him, and yet he never wearied in annoying them with a minute detail of all the real and fancied ills he endured. He grew daily less tolerable in society until he finally settled down into fixed melancholy, and his friends thought it proper to commit him to the wards of a lunatic asylum, where for a long time afterwards, he might have been seen crouched in some obscure corner, or with his limbs flexed upon his body, his hands thrown

over the back of his head, he would lie on the floor for hours together. No word or action gave evidence of any remaining intellect and thus he lived until he found rest in the grave.

S——, of good family and, until the age of eighteen years, of good mental developments and agreeable manners, became the subject of a very marked change of character. He complained of general "ill-health," gradually became less active in his habits—his temper was soured—gloomy and depressed, he abandoned society and sought solitude until finally he refused to quit his bed.

Almost every part of his body became successively the subject of complaint—his head, chest, back, limbs, etc.; and yet no evidence of any particular form of disease could be discovered. He declared that naught but death could relieve him. His appetite was good and he often ate ravenously—he had no fever and the principal functions seemed to be regularly performed. In spite of all this, progressive emaciation gave evidence of the existence of some serious

cause for his singular condition. He had passed through the hands of several physicians, each one wearied with what he considered as mere imaginary complaints, gladly giving place to his successor. Having observed him closely for some days and carefully analysed the history of the case I came to the conclusion that he was destroying himself by self-pollution.

I told him so in plain terms and implored him not to deceive himself any longer—that death was the least of the evils he might anticipate—loathsome disease—terrible suffering and the contempt of his friends were sure to follow such practices. He confessed his fault and after a long and doubtful struggle he ultimately recovered a tolerable state of health.

These are the cases which are too often treated with derision, laughed at and ridiculed. Friends too frequently refuse to credit the statement of the sufferings endured, and the physician too readily participates in the incredulity and contents himself with recommending employment, agreeable com-

pany, and the gaities of life. The only effect of this denial of sympathy to a truly miserable creature, is to drive him into deeper solitude—all confidence in his friends is lost—hope dies out and he becomes a wretched and confirmed melancholy misanthrope.

With enfeebled mind, shattered intellect and failing physical powers—with that instinctive shame, almost inseparable from self-abuse, how can the poor victim, while the cause is still active, summon the strength of will necessary to enable him to follow any advice? Active employment he cannot endure, society is painful, every movement of others is construed into abuse and injury, and the gaities and amusements of life appear but mockeries, and serve but to inflict the most intense agony. Let the cause be detected and removed, then good advice will be well timed—may be listened to patiently and followed with pleasure and advantage—until this is accomplished no good can come from any effort in that direction.

Those who become insane are especially subject to distressing hallucinations.

I. M——, student of medicine, fell into this habit soon after he arrived at the age of puberty, and after a time delivered himself to the practice with a sort of fury. He admits that he has repeated the offence more than twenty times in a single day. His memory failed and all his intellectual powers were involved. He believed himself the object of abuse by all who approached him, and was tormented night and day by their revilings which were constantly in his ears. He conceived that his brain was controlled by negroes who had “bewitched” him—that all his thoughts were known to every person within thirty or forty miles of him—that every word he uttered was distinctly heard at that distance. Threats of violence were constantly sounding in his ears and he was in ceaseless torture of apprehension. His professional pursuits were abandoned in despair—he wandered from place to place, occasionally engaging in labor, but soon seeking new scenes, from unfounded appre-

hension of danger. Imagining that the State had seized upon his brain and converted it into a telegraph, he went to Washington City to enter suit in the Federal court; but there he encountered new dangers and fled again, as he supposed, the most unjustly persecuted man alive. The torture he endured it would be impossible to describe. What a life of misery he has purchased by a fault which, had he known its consequences in the beginning, he would doubtless have abandoned at once!

Hallucinations of persons subject to this vice very often lead to the perpetration of terrible crimes. A case of this sort is given at page one hundred and two, and many others might be added.

Very many of these supposed criminals have expiated their offences by an ignominious death, while others have been permitted to drag out a miserable existence in cheerless prisons or the wards of some lunatic asylum.

EPILEPSY.—This terrible disease is much more frequently the result of masturbation

than is generally thought. When the disease has arisen from other causes, the habit augments the frequency of the paroxysms and commits sad ravages with the physical and mental powers. The subjects rapidly sink into the most hopeless state of drivelling idiocy, some finding a lower level than that occupied by the most senseless brutes; or, their stupidity is interrupted only by outbursts of uncontrollable and destructive violence, during which they seem to lose all consciousness of surrounding objects; they appear to neither hear, see or feel, but strike indifferently at every thing within their reach. After a short period they lapse again into passive listlessness.

When there is any predisposition to this malady its development is hastened by indulgence in this vice and often occurs at a very early period of life.

It is important to know that many cases of epilepsy are the results of this one cause.

M——was remarkably stout and healthy until after the age of puberty, when he learned from a companion the way to illegitimate

pleasures. His excesses were extraordinary as I learned from himself. When he had long indulged in the habit, on the evening of a day when he had practiced his manœuvres very many times, he became the subject of a violent epileptic seizure. This excited much alarm in his family among whom no such disease had ever occurred. When brought to me at the age of twenty years, his parents were utterly at a loss to explain the cause of his affliction and he was equally ignorant, for he had no idea that the habit in which he indulged was injurious. When his health was some what restored, and his mental powers improved, I succeeded in forcing the conviction upon his mind that his fate was in a great degree in his own keeping, and urged the necessity of a strenuous effort at self-control. He did second my efforts zealously, and the result was that the intervals were gradually lengthened and finally some months passed away without a paroxysm. He returned home but I learned with regret sometime afterward that he faltered in his purpose, returned to

his old habits and ultimately lost his life by accident, during a violent seizure.

“A man twenty-three years old, became epileptic, after debilitating his body by frequent masturbation. Whenever he had nocturnal pollutions, a fit of epilepsy ensued; and the same thing occurred after masturbation—from which, however, he did not abstain, notwithstanding the bad symptoms with which it was followed. After the fit had subsided, he felt very severe pains in the kidneys, and around the coccyx. Having, however, abstained from his manipulations for some time, the pollutions disappeared; and we had hopes of curing the epilepsy, the attacks of which were less frequent. He had regained his strength, appetite, sleep and color, after resembling a cadaver; but having returned to his bad habits, which were always followed by fits, he was found dead bathed in blood, in his chamber one morning.”

Epilepsy is one of the most fatal and irremediable of all the consequences of self-pollution. It has seemed to me that

epileptics are more apt to recur to their evil practices than those who have been relieved of other consequences. One of my patients abstained for nearly six years and, during all that period, did not have a single fit; yet, when he gave way again to self-indulgence he became as sorely afflicted as before. Having lost sight of him soon after the recurrence of the malady I am not able to give the final result.

CHOREA OR ST. VITUS' DANCE.—I think I have met with two cases of this malady resulting from self-pollution. Other causes may have contributed to their production, but, certainly, the practice was indulged in by both. One was a youth only twelve years old, with whom the habit was broken up and after a long course of treatment, the disease disappeared, several years have elapsed and he is in good health, but is of feeble intellect and treacherous memory. The other was a female, who had indulged at a still earlier period of life, and who, in mature age, still followed the practice and chorea was permanently established.

CATALEPSY—a disease, in which there is a more or less perfect suspension of the senses and volition—the limbs maintaining even the most painful positions given them, has been attributed to masturbation. I have never witnessed a case that could be distinctly traced to this cause, but I have no doubt any cause, capable of exciting such a disturbing influence on the brain and nervous system, may have such an effect.

PARALYSIS—is not an unfrequent result, and this may be partial or general.

I knew one case of universal paralysis;—the young man was incapable of moving a single muscle of the body, and lingered many months before he was able to stand erect. He had sufficient mind remaining to be conscious of his fault, and sufficient strength of will to aid in the cure by self-denial. He ultimately recovered a very good degree of health.

In some cases the paralysis is only partial—the lower extremities are most frequently involved; probably owing to an affection of the spinal marrow, which is always impli-

cated to some extent. There is nothing more common than pain and twitching of the muscles of the thigh. Extraordinary rigidity of the muscles sometimes, also occurs. The following abstract of a case from Tissot, is a type of two or three cases which have fallen under my observation equally fatal, if not so deplorable during life. Having given a detail of his condition—(naturally a very stout healthy person) he proceeds to say, that for many months before his death the patient was unable to stand erect or move his limbs; the movement of his tongue became still more embarrassed and his voice was lost so that it was only with difficulty that any one could understand what he said; his head rested upon the chest; he had pain in the loins, and both sleep and appetite deserted him. During several of the last months of life he had great difficulty in swallowing; then came severe oppression and irregular fever; the eyes were singularly dull; most of his time both day and night, he passed in an arm chair inclining backwards, with his legs

resting on another chair, his head falling every instant on his chest. A person was standing constantly beside him and without a moment's cessation was occupied in changing his position, raising his head, feeding him and giving what aid and comfort his deplorable condition admitted. Towards the close of life he could no longer pronounce words, but made his wants known by single letters. As Tissot gave no hope, and employed only palliatives for the oppression and fever, the victim being anxious to live he confided to a friend the cause of his affliction, till then concealed by him and undiscovered by his physicians. He attributed all the ills he endured to masturbation which infamous practice he began many years before, and continued as long as he had the power. He declared that all his ills grew in proportion to the excesses to which he yielded. His friend communicated the facts to Tissot and the patient himself confirmed them a few days afterwards.

“A woman brought her son, aged eight, to the Hospital St. Elri; he had lost the use

of his lower extremities for some months. The limbs were fixed, and drawn together and all the muscles contracted. The child was extremely thin, and his intellect was much disturbed. Masturbation, the cause of all these disorders, had only been discovered by his mother a few weeks before."

This child was completely restored to health and vigor.

DISEASE OF THE HEART—It is doubted whether organic disease of the heart is ever exclusively the product of this vice; but all writers on the subject admit that the habit has no more frequent consequence than functional derangement of the circulation, and that it is speedily destructive when organic disease already exists. I have no doubt that it is in many cases the sole cause of organic affections of the organ—there is no organ of the body more violently affected by every repetition of the venereal act, and when the act is repeated many times every day, it cannot fail to alter the structure of the heart as well as to derange its action. Few masturbators escape evidence of disease

here, intermitting pulse and palpitations are common phenomena. Running a short distance, or even walking rapidly, or ascending a pair of stairs, will quickly bring on violent palpitations and a most distressing sense of suffocation. It is true, however, that the action of the heart is frequently deranged without apparent organic change; and may be relieved by abstinence from the indulgence, and such treatment as is calculated to obviate its consequences.

H——, was pursuing his studies at college, which, however, were interrupted by the occurrence of what was supposed to be a fatal form of Disease of the Heart. He was advised to live quietly and cautiously, as the only possible means of protracting a life which, at best, must bring him to a premature grave. He was pale, emaciated, feeble and desponding—the slightest exertion brought on palpitations and a sense of suffocation, most agonizing and quite distressing to behold. These symptoms occurred also sometimes at night when he was in bed. When called to see him, and

after repeated explorations for that purpose, I failed to find any of the physical signs of organic disease, I told him frankly that I suspected indulgence in bad habits, and warned him that there was no safety but in a candid avowal of the fact, if true, a total abandonment of the practice and the use of remedies for the consequences. He readily confessed it, but declared that he did not suppose his affliction was due to that cause, as several of his companions were alike guilty without apparent suffering. He was however soon convinced of his error and then recollected that his night attacks generally followed indulgence in bed, or unusual excess the preceding day, and that in some instances he had intermitted the practice two or three weeks at a time and could call to mind that he was then less subject to violent attacks. He abandoned the practice, was treated for some of its consequences and restored to perfect health. The young man finished his collegiate course with credit, is now the father of an interesting family, and has more than ordi-

nary character for literary attainments. His heart has given no trouble for years.

ASTHMA—has been observed as one of the consequences of the vice. I have not met with a case except in persons predisposed to the disease, or whose ancestors were affected in a similar manner. That in such persons it acts as an exciting cause, provoking its developement, I can entertain no doubt; and it is probable that it may also be the sole cause in some instances. The frequent disturbance of respiration and the disorder of the nervous system are well calculated to induce such results.

THE SENSES—are always affected, sometimes only slightly, at others one or more of them may suffer total insensibility.

SIGHT—Perhaps no consequence of masturbation is more frequent than partial or total loss of sight. I do not recollect a single case, where I have given special attention to the sight, that I have not found it defective. This may not be obvious without particular examination. The sight may appear to be as perfect as ever it was,

but test it by requiring the patient to read small print, or to examine minutely some small objects, and he will soon complain of fatigue, dizziness, vertigo, etc.

Hoffman witnessed many cases of injury to the eyes from this cause. He was called to a man who began to masturbate at the age of fifteen, who continued to practice it very frequently until he reached the age of twenty-three. During this period his head and eyes became feeble and the latter were affected with spasm, at the time of emission. If he attempted to read he became dizzy; the pupils dilated in an extraordinary manner; his eyes were very painful and the lids glued together during sleep; they were suffused with tears and the corners filled with a whitish matter. Although he ate with pleasure he was reduced to extreme emaciation, and after eating he fell into a kind of intoxication.

One of Dr. Woodward's patients gives in a letter to him the following account of the manner in which his sight became affected. "About two years ago I first

noticed several small spots or bubbles floating before my eyes; they have gradually become larger and more numerous, until my eye-sight is very much clouded. These "cobwebs" constantly floating before my eyes when I read or walk or look, annoy me excessively; and should they continue to increase at this rate, it cannot be many months before the result will be total loss of vision. My eyes, particularly in the morning, are affected with a burning sensation, which renders it almost impossible for me to use them for several minutes after rising—they seem to be full of sand—the light is very oppressive—I usually keep the blind closed to my room at all times of the day."

I have at this time two cases under treatment and it is the source of great vexation to both subjects that it is impracticable to read more than a few minutes. They become dizzy—the letters blur, sight is obscured by a kind of mist etc.

HEARING—Next to the sight, the hearing is most frequently impaired. Some degree

of deafness is common, but in a few cases the hearing becomes more acute and the slightest cause gives intolerable pain. In some instances the patient becomes perfectly deaf. Hallucinations of hearing are frequently observed. Roaring or whistling sounds or voices sounding in the ears are often complained of. Complaints of abusive words from those who have not spoken or, from persons who are many miles distant, are of daily occurrence. I have at this time several persons under my care whose greatest distress arises from imaginary abuse from others; and they will detail minutely all that they believe to have been uttered by other persons in regard to themselves. Reason has no more influence to convince them of their error than if the words had been really spoken; you had as well attempt to persuade a sane man that he does not exist as one of these sufferers that they are deluded.

I am convinced that almost all the homicides or other violence done to persons by masturbators, have their origin in the dis-

turbance of this organ. Most cruel deeds have been perpetrated, some times on perfect strangers, and the only apology offered has been some fancied word or act of the victim who had neither motive or design to give offense.

TASTE—is generally perverted, probably in consequence of the general derangement of the digestive organs. To some, all substances are alike and they will feed on those of a most disgusting character. Others are constantly complaining of a bitter taste and clammy condition of the mouth and, that nothing has its natural flavor—hence some refuse all sustenance and require to have their food forced upon them.

SMELL—This sense is also sometimes lost, but more frequently weakened or perverted. While some distinguish no odors, however intense, others are acutely sensitive; and still others have hallucinations of the sense and complain incessantly of the most disgusting and overpowering odors. They have a penetrating sense of smells which no one else perceives and, which in reality do not exist.

Pain in the nose is a common complaint. I have observed in several cases a very peculiar manner of putting the thumb and fore-finger to the nose, as if in the act of taking snuff, only the fingers are placed rather more towards the point of the organ and are moved slightly as if feeling it gently. The movement is so singular as to readily attract attention and, I have not noticed it with any, except confirmed masturbators.

FEELING—This sense may fall into the same unnatural condition. A single spot, one or both hands, etc. may become acutely sensitive or quite insensible. Some complain of heat or cold when those about them are quite comfortable; or, they endure an amount of cold with apparent indifference, that would be intolerable to others. I have seen cases where the nerves of the surface seemed to have become so deadened that the subjects appeared to be insensible to painful impressions of any sort.

IMPOTENCY—is one of the most fearful consequences of self-pollution and, has very often led to suicide leaving the friends of the

victim to wonder what could have prompted to the fatal deed. It is remarkable that one who is guilty of self-pollution, perhaps several times daily, may be wholly incapable of intercourse with the other sex, and, when not impotent, disgust for the opposite sex is a frequent feature. The desires and capacity for enjoyment have assumed a morbid character; nature, intolerant of a violation of her laws, has given them over to their vile passion which hurries them on to inevitable ruin.

W——, twenty-three years old called to submit himself to examination. He said he feared he was not constituted like ordinary men—that he found himself with all the inclinations of others; yet, incapable of sexual intercourse—that he had unfortunately formed an attachment for a very interesting lady, and finding his affection reciprocated he had imprudently proposed and was accepted—that the time was approaching when the period for their nuptials must be fixed—that he remembered that frequent trials with the other sex had always resulted in

mortifying failures—and that he feared, if he married, he could not consummate the alliance. Much as he loved his affianced, he would decline the alliance, but he could give to others no satisfactory reason for such a course. He was ready to submit to an examination and any operation or treatment that might promise to make him like other men. I shall not soon forget the agony he endured. I believe he even then contemplated suicide as the alternative; I know he did in the course of the treatment, when at one time he almost despaired of relief.

The young man had scarcely begun the relation of his case before I recognized the cause and abruptly enquired at what age he began to indulge in solitary habits? Starting with surprise he replied “about fourteen; but what has that to do with the matter?” I assured him that this was the whole source of his affliction and that the cure was in a great measure in his own hands. After a long course of treatment he married and lives very happily with a growing family about him. The most obvious remnant of

the consequences of his folly is a defective memory.

Similar cases have not always terminated so happily. Persons have ventured upon matrimony and learned only when too late that they had imprudently assumed duties they were incapable of performing. Their friends have noticed a rapid change of character—sullen, morose and gloomy—they avoid their best friends, and seek solitude where they may brood over their sad fate. Goaded by mortification, remorse and despair, ere the honey moon closes they have terminated an existence, than which none can be more miserable. This has been the fate of some who stood fair in the eye of the world and who had so far retained strength of intellect, as to be regarded as persons of superior minds. Is there any wonder that these melancholy cases should excite surprise—that the world should feel astounded to learn that without apparent cause, a young and amiable wife, fame and fortune were all abandoned, voluntarily, amid scenes and circumstances which usually

inspire the most joyous and buoyant spirits.

When impotency has not ensued, not unfrequently the masturbator feels a disgust for legitimate pleasure; and this has often rendered persons unhappy after marrying. A lady acknowledged to Bekkers that the infamous practice had acquired such empire over her senses that she detested her husband; and Tissot says he knew a man who experienced the same disgust immediately after his marriage; the anguish of his situation, joined to the exhaustion of his evil habits, threw him into a profound melancholy which, however, ultimately yielded to suitable remedies. Within the last few days a medical friend in a neighboring city informed me that a married lady had recently applied to him for relief from this consequence of the vice.

This disgust for the opposite sex and preference for unnatural indulgence have been confessed to me by several persons, who have applied for relief from some of the evils entailed by this vice.

The friends of one young man sought to

wean him from his unnatural indulgence by temptations adroitly thrown in his way; but he looked upon these objects with disgust and abused himself with a zeal that ultimately wrought utter ruin. This and other similar cases, with like results have been reported to me by reliable persons.

SATYRIASIS—or an inordinate desire for sexual intercourse, during which all modesty is lost and shame is unknown, sometimes results from an excessive excitation of the genital organs. Erections are frequent, but not painful; they occur without apparent cause of excitement. The whole being is absorbed in one single idea and dominates over all; erotic impulses are violent and irresistible—the imagination is active, and vivid; voluptuous images fill the mind and sway the movements of the victim. Sleeping or awake he is unceasingly pursued by this demon which his own bad habits has fixed upon him. All self-control is ultimately lost—modesty is annihilated—the fear of death itself is unfelt. The face is flushed, the eye is lighted up with an un-

natural fire, the features are animated, the mouth foams; the body exhales a peculiar odor and adds to the disgust with which these pitiable objects are always viewed; no object is too sacred or disgusting to escape the maniac's attempts. If for a moment passion subsides and reason resumes her empire the miserable victim is overwhelmed with shame and mortification.

This form of disease has generally been referred to excessive continence; but I am sure that Gall states the truth in this matter. He says; "Familiarised with human weaknesses, I am more disposed to attribute erotic mania to excesses, than to too great continence. These excesses produce such an irritability and excitability of the cerebellum, that it is no longer in the power of the individual to stop the torrent of salacious ideas and voluptuous images which pour in upon him." This is especially true when the indulgence has been in solitary habits.

Sometimes no venereal desires are present—no voluptuous ideas come to excite and torment the patient. There is a firm and

painful erection accompanied with a burning sensation. This is probably the result of the constant excitement and irritation of the nerves supplying the parts. Sometimes it occurs only when in bed and is readily abated by rising or by cold applications; at other times it respects no time or position, and yielding to no remedies is so continuous and painful that sleep becomes impossible, and the patient is overwhelmed with fatigue. Then fever supervenes marked with anxiety, head-ache, thirst, excessive agitation and delirium. There are pains in the loins, the urine is passed with difficulty and intense pain, and the water is often mixed with blood. The agony endured from pain and loss of sleep is indescribable. I knew one case to last several weeks, during which the unfortunate man obtained but little sleep and scarcely any intermission of pain. He was worn to a skeleton and when the irritation subsided he recovered his forces very slowly.

NYPHOMANIA—answers in the female to satyriasis in the male. It bears the same general characteristics, except that generally

the female still seeks to win by charms, rather than to exact favors by force; yet, the instinctive delicacy of the sex has lost all control and the poor creature falls from her high estate to rise no more—she may recover her self-possession and the furor may pass away; but self-respect is never regained, especially when the affection has resulted from evil practices. I will give an extreme case which has fallen under my own observation.

E——, aged about twenty years, still of full habit in spite of her excesses became the victim of secret vice early in life and ultimately so far lost all power of self-control, that her habits could be no longer concealed. Except when restrained by force she did not hesitate to practice her manœuvres in the presence of any number of persons; she appeared to be utterly lost to all shame or was so absorbed in her guilty passion as to be unconscious and insensible to surrounding objects. The act was repeated scores of times in a single day. I need scarcely say that she was soon reduced

to a hopeless state of dementia—a filthy and disgusting wretch.

In a case of nymphomania, in a patient to whom Dr. Copland was called in consultation, and who was sixteen years of age, the intelligent mother, the wife of an eminent physician in India, stated that the disease originated in masturbation acquired from a native Indian nurse, when the child was only four years old.

There is an essential difference between another form of mental disease known as erotomania, and the two maladies I have just noticed; the former is not inconsistent with the highest degree of chastity and purity, and does not necessarily involve anything gross or sensual; it may be an excess of love for either a real or an imaginary object, and will not justify a suspicion of indulgence in secret vice. In the language of Esquirol; "Erotomania is to nymphomania and satyriasis, what the ardent affections of the heart, when chaste and honorable are, in comparison with frightful libertinism; while proposals the most obscene, and ac-

tions the most shameful and humiliating, betray both nymphomania and satyriasis."

The feeling of pure love is wholly unconnected with sensuality, even when it becomes so excessive as to constitute a species of insanity and the inference that such thoughts ever intrude upon that chaste and holy passion is altogether unwarranted.

SPERMATORRHŒA—or involuntary loss of semen, is not only one of the most common, but also one of the most unfortunate results of masturbation. It degrades man—poisons the happiness of his best days and inflicts serious injury on society.

Of 109 cases of this disease observed by Mr. Philips, 97 admitted that they were or had been masturbators, a sufficient answer to the allegation that the malady results from continence. This disease induces the same evils that follow masturbation and when, as is frequently the case, the discharge is without erection or sensation, it is even more exhaustive than the vice. It has been distinguished into nocturnal or diurnal, as it occurs at night or during the day; for my

purpose the distinction is not important. But it is material to know that it may occur without the knowledge of the patient himself; because, if the origin of the debility of body and mind, which inevitably follows, is not discovered, the proper treatment will not be adopted; and the patient will go on growing worse daily and ultimately have his health utterly broken up; or perhaps, terminate his life by suicide or linger out a miserable existence in a lunatic asylum. When the loss is accompanied with erection and sensation, although it may be at night and during sleep, the patient is aware of it; and he may have the discretion to call the attention of his physician to his weakness; but when there is no consciousness of the loss—when it passes off every time the bladder and bowels are emptied, it may not attract attention and large quantities of physic may be swallowed without avail. These losses are of very frequent occurrence with those who, after practicing the secret vice for a long time, are led to abandon it from a conviction that it is injuring their health

or from moral scruples. The patient is surprised that his health is still further deteriorated and that no regimen or medicine seems to exert any influence in arresting the progress of his disorders. Happily, if the cause is discovered and removed, the patient usually recovers his vigor rapidly; a suspension for only a few days produces a wonderful effect on the body and mind; the spirits become buoyant and the most cheerful and delightful feelings replace those of gloom and melancholy. The return of the disorder for a single day will sometimes destroy hope, and cause a renewal of despair which too often looks to suicide as preferable to the misery endured.

The following is an abstract of a case related by a sufferer in a letter to Tissot. "I had the misfortune, like other young persons, to fall into a habit as pernicious to the body as to the mind. Age, aided by reason, corrected sometime since this miserable inclination, but the evil is done. To the extraordinary affection and sensibility of the nervous system, and to the accident

which it occasions, is joined debility, mal-aise, ennui and overwhelming distress. *I am exhausted by an almost continual loss of semen.* My face is almost cadaveric—a pale leaden color. Digestion is imperfect; my food is passed quite unaltered some three or four hours after it is taken. My lungs are filled with phlegm which throws me into agony and the expectoration produces great exhaustion. This terrible misery is augmented by the sad conviction that I feel that the following day will be still more fatal than the preceding; in a word I believe that no human creature was ever afflicted with so many evils.”

Many persons suffer in this way and fly from one physician to another and pass through the hands of both regular and irregular practitioners without relief, simply because the origin of the malady remains undiscovered. The semen is passed while at stool or it falls into the bladder quietly and is emitted with the urine. Many of my patients have denied any loss of semen until their attention was directed to the

excretions when they have discovered that my suspicions were well founded.

B——, aged thirty-two, had been sometime failing in health. He complained of great debility; was dyspeptic, the slightest impropriety in diet causing the utmost distress; he had pains in various parts of the body, particularly, in the muscles of one thigh, etc.

He confessed that he had been a masturbator, but had abandoned the practice a long time since, on the conviction that he was injuring his health. Nocturnal emissions were very rare and he declared that he had had no other loss for a long time; yet, his health was growing worse daily. Having instructed him to ascertain if there was not some loss at the time of emptying the bowels or bladder, he informed me a short time afterwards that such was the case—a small quantity of glairy fluid accompanied the last drops of urine and escaped from the canal when he was costive. He was put upon treatment and slowly recovered.

The following is given by the sufferer in

a letter to Dr. Woodward. "When I was between *thirteen* and *fourteen* years of age, and I do not know but between *eleven* and *twelve*, I think, however, it is the latter, I was induced by a young man with whom I slept, to follow the practice of masturbation though not without some threats on his part, and indeed was forced to by him. After a while I needed neither forcing or threatening, but did it voluntarily from three to twelve times a week, till I was between seventeen and eighteen, when I became convinced it was sinful, and abandoned it; and never, to my knowledge, have practiced it since, no, not even once, as I made it a matter of conscience—but I have had the spontaneous or involuntary emissions, and the nocturnal pollution more or less ever since, especially in lascivious dreams; and sometimes in female company, the involuntary emissions have troubled me greatly. For years I never harbored the thought that it was injuring my health. But since my eyes have troubled me, which is between two and three years, I have sometimes

thought it might be owing to this cause. I am now about twenty-one years of age."

"*He never harbored a thought that it was injuring his health*"—what an amount of suffering this young man would have escaped if he had been properly instructed in early life!

W——, a gentleman fifty years old, after having passed through various methods of treatment—regular and irregular, applied to me on account of ill-health. Allopathic, homeopathic and hydropathic measures had been adopted and pursued with only temporary benefit in each case. He was emaciated and feeble, his eyes were sunken and his features indicated long and intense suffering. His limbs were remarkably small and he could sustain himself only under very moderate exercise. In spite of extraordinary care in relation to diet he was the subject of indigestion and a long and painful catalogue of incident evils. He felt acutely every variation of temperature and the difficulty of maintaining a comfortable degree of warmth even in moderate weather, was one of his most prominent complaints.

All the suffering he endured was uniformly attributed to ill-health, but no one had suggested any probable cause. In early life he engaged in school teaching, and was induced to abandon that pursuit for more active employment, with a view of improving his general health. For a short time he was encouraged to hope that the change would result in restoring his lost vigor. But he soon began to fail again, and after a long struggle he was compelled to abandon all regular business.

On inquiry I learned that he was the subject of a daily loss of semen. He did not suspect this until I requested him to observe whether this was not the case when he passed urine or emptied his bowels. He had noticed previously the passage of a small quantity, especially when he was constipated, and he soon noticed a more abundant waste with the urine. He confessed that he had been a masturbator, but had long since abandoned the practice from mere shame—that for some time afterwards he was much troubled by frequent nocturnal emissions;

but these had ceased, and he had now no venereal desires or erections. The whole difficulty was explained, but too late for perfect cure. He was relieved in some degree, but it is to be feared he must bear some portion of the fruit of sin for life.

CONSUMPTION—is a frequent termination of the ills incident to this terrible vice. If there is any taint in the system—if the poor victim has inherited a predisposition to phthisis, it is speedily developed and makes rapid progress. But I have seen very many perish of this disorder who were descended from perfectly healthy parents whose ancestors had never known that form of disease. A few cases will illustrate this subject better than any general description, and I might relate scores observed by myself, for this has seemed to me to be the most common termination of these cases. The following case is reported by Federigo: “I knew a female who was affected for many years with extreme debility and entire loss of appetite. A slow fever every evening had rendered her extremely thin; her eyes

were pale and sunken; her skin was very hot, and it was highly painful for her to stand erect; a profuse discharge weakened her still more; and she was in an advanced state of marasmus. All the active remedies, as preparations of iron, decoctions of cinchona, and mineral waters were tried without success. She died in a most deplorable state of consumption. I attempted, by questioning her as to her mode of living, to discover the cause of her disease but unsuccessfully. A month before her death, however, she told me with tears in her eyes, that she brought her debility upon herself, by indulging constantly and for many years in a secret and murderous habit."

Deslands reports the case of a young man who, although in the last stages of consumption, indulged whenever attention was withdrawn from him, and continued to do so almost to the moment of death.

T——, was of robust constitution and enjoyed vigorous health until the age of eighteen. His parents were stout and healthy—neither was tainted with any hereditary

malady, no case of consumption having occurred in any member of their large families. At the age of sixteen T. contracted the habit of self-abuse and before the expiration of twelve months, he gave loose to his unnatural passions without restraint. His health failed rapidly, and although he ate large quantities of food, emaciation progressed until he was reduced to a mere skeleton. Physically he was a most wretched object while scarcely a vestige of mind remained. A slow consuming fever and a laborious and almost incessant cough still farther exhausted the poor victim. In this miserable condition he lingered on for months before death came to end his sufferings. He was treated by several eminent physicians, but the cause of the malady was wholly misapprehended until a few months before his death, when it was discovered, but too late to rescue him from an untimely grave.

MARASMUS—Many masturbators die without any special form of disease. They gradually waste away—have no fever or cough

no pain is complained of—the appetite is good—enough food is regularly consumed, and yet the body wastes away until the whole frame is extremely attenuated and the limbs appear to be mere skin and bones. In this condition they will sometimes linger a long time—feeble and senseless—and ultimately die of exhaustion.

FLUOR ALBUS—or Whites is one of the most common results of self-abuse with females. I have never treated a case where this affection did not exist. Although this disease may arise from other causes, Deslands says, he always suspected masturbation when it occurred in young girls. He adds, “Whenever we have addressed females on the subject, to ascertain this fact, our conjectures have been verified. This has frequently been the case with servant girls. We have seen several, who were so weakened by fluor albus, and the irritation of the sexual parts, that they have been obliged to quit their situations, being unable to do their duty. We will even say, that the most sincere of these girls have given me such

information as to their habits, that we suspect most of this class of onanism."

Many other maladies have been attributed to masturbation as a cause, such as organic diseases of the testicles, water in the scrotum, disease of the vessels of the cord, etc., but I have not happened to meet with such cases when I was entirely certain that such was their true origin—the fact is mentioned however, on the authority of physicians of the highest repute.

I have, however, frequently met with unnatural discharges from the urethra, irritability and other affections of the bladder from this source, and when young persons thus complain, and no obvious cause is apparent, attention should always be directed to the habits of the patient.

The same care should be exercised when young females are the subjects of hysteria, cramps in the stomach, pain in the nose, inflammation of the organs of generation, falling of the womb, etc.

Not unfrequently the effects of masturbation are attributed to too rapid growth.

This is not a common cause of disease and should not be allowed to arrest investigation. If the physician will prosecute his inquiry, as he should do, in these cases, it is highly probable that he will see cause to dismiss this from any share in the production of disease.

I have made no effort to avoid repetition, especially in regard to the consequences of this destructive vice. I have not thought it inappropriate to give line upon line and precept upon precept. I have given one picture drawn by Dr. Clarke, and I have made up a general summary of the effects of indulgence in this debasing crime, and followed it with some details, in regard to certain diseases which frequently result from the practice, illustrating the whole, as far as possible, by cases observed by myself and others. And, yet, I will add one more sketch—truthful, graphic, and impressive—by the celebrated Hufeland. One sketch may strike certain minds, and another arrest the attention of others differently constituted; and I have hoped, by multiplying the pictures to save

some youth from taking the first step, and peradventure reclaim some already guilty.

Hufeland says; "Nature avenges nothing so dreadfully as transgressions against herself.

When transgressions prove mortal, they are always crimes against nature. It is in-

deed, highly worthy of remark, that a dissipation which seems to be so perfectly alike

in all its parts should, however, be so different in its consequences, according as it is

confined to a natural or unnatural method; and as I am acquainted with judicious men

who cannot be fully convinced of this difference, I shall embrace the present opportunity of showing how onanism, in either

sex, does infinitely more mischief than natural enjoyment. Horrid is the impression

stamped by nature on such an offender! He is like a faded rose tree, blasted in the bloom, a

wandering skeleton. All his fire and spirit are deadened by this detestable vice; and

nothing remains but debility, langour, livid paleness, a withered body and a degraded

soul. The eyes lose their lustre and strength; the pupils seem sunk; the features

are distorted and lengthened; the rose complexion of youth vanishes, and the visage appears of a pale white leaden color. The whole body becomes affected, and sensible of the slightest impressions; the muscular power is lost; sleep brings with it no refreshment; every movement is attended with torture; the legs can no longer support the body; the hands tremble; aching pains arise in all the limbs; the faculty of thought is deranged, and cheerfulness is banished. The unhappy sufferer speaks little, and as if it were only by force; and all his former liveliness of mind is depressed. A youth endowed by nature with genius and talents, becomes dull, or totally stupid; the mind loses all taste for virtuous and exalted ideas; and the imagination is altogether corrupted. The slightest circumstance respecting a female is capable of exciting in him desire, shame, horror, and repentance; and his despair of the cure of the evils, renders his misery complete. The whole life of such a man is a continued succession of secret reproaches; of painful sensations, arising from the con-

sciousness of having brought upon himself internal weakness; and of irresolution and disgust of life. It need excite no surprise that such an unhappy wretch should at length become a self-murderer, for no man is so much exposed to suicide as the onanist. The wasting of that which gives life, excites disgust of life in the highest degree, and that singular kind of self-murder, *par depot*, which is so peculiar to the present age. Besides, the powers of digestion are destroyed; the patient is tormented with flatulencies, and cramps in the stomach; the blood becomes corrupted; the breast is choked up with phlegm; and eruptions and ulcers in the skin, a desiccation and wasting in the whole frame, epilepsy, asthma, slow fever, debility and premature death, are at length the consequences."

It must be borne in mind that all these symptoms are not to be looked for in any one case—the picture is drawn from a great number of subjects. In some cases only a few symptoms will be prominent, and in others every part of the system will suffer,

and no one of the least observation will mistake the cause. When suspicion is once aroused a careful observer will soon detect the culprit, so that no one need be accused until there is ample and undeniable evidence that the suspicion is well founded.

I have thus enumerated the principal maladies that are engendered, and the numerous ills that beset those who deliver themselves to this infamous vice; but it is the opinion of Dr. Copland and other distinguished medical writers, and the opinion is confirmed by my own observation, that the *evil consequences* of self-pollution are not confined to the individual, but *are transmitted to the offspring*, when the effects have not been such, in kind and degree, as to prevent procreation. But when the constitutional powers, and more especially the sexual organs, of either sex, are much weakened by this vice, either sterility is the consequence, or the offspring is delicate, puny, decrepit, or the subject of congenital maladies, especially of the nervous system; to idiocy, from deficient development of the brain;

to hydrocephalus, to epilepsy, convulsions, palsy. The scrofulous, diathesis, tubercular and glandular maladies, diseases of the vertebræ and of the joints, hydrocephalus and softening of the central portions of the brain, and tubercular formations in the membranes, palsy and convulsions, chorea, inflammations of the membranes or substance of the brain, or of the spinal cord, and numerous other affections to which delicate infants and children are liable, very commonly result from self-pollution having been practiced by either of the parents previously to the married state. But the evil does not always stop at this epoch of existence; it often extends throughout the life of the offspring; or it appears only with puberty and mature age. The several diseases actually proceeding from tubercular deposits; insanity or mental weakness, or imbecility; pulmonary consumption, chronic debility, or faulty or impaired development of the frame; diseases of the spine or joints; hysterical and neuralgic affections, epilepsy and irregular forms of convulsions, partial or complete forms of

palsy, are the various consequences of the constitutional predisposition arising from the vice of the parent, and the faulty development and impaired nervous energy of the offspring. Such are the terrible consequences to the innocent progeny of debased parents, who reap in mature years a bitter harvest from the vices of youth. What can be more distressing than for parents to witness the physical and mental weakness and the suffering of their children, when they are conscious that these are the results of their own vicious practices.

If only a few young persons are deterred or reclaimed from the degrading practice of masturbation by this little volume, I shall feel that I have not lived in vain, and that I am amply compensated for the labor it has cost me.

CHAPTER III.

PREVENTION.

I come now to the most important topic connected with our subject. To limit the

empire and arrest the progress of this great vice, are the end and aim of all that I have said on this, in itself, most disgusting and repulsive malady.

In order to appreciate the importance of guarding against the formation of this destructive habit, one must be duly impressed with the numerous causes which may lead to it; the enormous evils resulting from the practice; the rapidly augmenting power which it exerts over its deluded victims; and the almost insurmountable difficulties of effecting a cure when the habit is of long standing. I hope enough has been said in the first and second chapters of this little work in relation to the causes and consequences of masturbation; and I, therefore, think it only proper to add a few remarks in regard to the extreme liability to great excess, when the practice is once begun, and the difficulty of reclaiming those in whom the habit is confirmed.

Excess is the invariable rule with all who yield to the allurements of this vice. It is an evil in itself and injurious however prac-

ticed. But universal observation demonstrates that no one can fix limits to a violation of any of the fundamental laws of nature, and that in all such cases there is an invariable tendency to increasing excesses. The growth of the power of masturbation is promoted in many ways. It is a solitary vice and does not require the concurrence of others;—it may be practiced at any hour of the day or night;—it is seductive and grows in strength as it is more frequently practiced;—there are many incentives which make a powerful impression on the mind, already filled with salacious ideas;—as its demands become more imperative, the power of the will is weakened until, finally, all self-control is lost, and resistance on the part of the victim, becomes quite impossible. There is no safety but in total abstinence. The career of folly once entered upon, accelerated speed is acquired by every repetition of the act of self-indulgence.

After a time the organs become so sensitive and irritable that the slightest touch is sufficient to bring on a crisis, which still

further debilitates the poor sufferer; or, with augmented desires for illegitimate pleasures, the parts lose their wonted sensibility, and no longer respond to the usual manœuvres. Under such circumstances most extraordinary means have been used to affect the desired purpose. No case has come under my observation where there was not a sensible increase of indulgence, until the apprehensions of the subject were aroused by warnings of the fatal consequences of such practices; or until the power of the organs was totally exhausted and impotency existed.

After more or less protracted indulgence, the vice gains such empire that its victim finds it impossible, although sincerely desiring it, to summon sufficient resolution to resist its importunities. I have treated many such cases, when the disease had made direful progress, and the patient was convinced that he was bringing ruin upon himself, and ardently desired to regain his lost estate. I have witnessed the intense agony of remorse and despair which followed the act—an act which they would but could not resist.

If then, like all other vices, this naturally becomes more and more seductive and resistless; and, at the same time, the power of self-control becomes less energetic, how important it is to adopt every measure to prevent the first step in folly.

It is always difficult to reclaim the masturbator. The wonderful persistence of those in whom the habit is fixed is the greatest obstacle in the way of effecting a cure. It is so difficult to break up the habit, and to restore ordinary self-control, that many distinguished members of the medical profession have declared masturbation absolutely incurable. Hippocrates recognised the vice in his day, and pronounced it incurable. Booserhaave says; "I have seen it often, I have not been able to cure it." Happily the fate of the masturbator is not so gloomy and hopeless as this; for many, lending their aid to intelligent physicians of the present day, have been cured and restored to society and usefulness. But it is proper to say that all medical men, whose practice has happened to lie in this particular direction, admit that

from the time the habit is well established formidable obstacles to a cure present themselves; and that when a certain point is passed, scarce a hope of reclamation remains. These obstacles are augmented when the practice is begun at an early age; the rapid growth of the body, and the development of the mind, will not tolerate the concentration of the vital energies on any one organ; and least of all on organs the exercise of which is most exhausting.

The desperate persistence of those who have long pursued the practice of masturbation may be illustrated by reference to well authenticated cases, put upon record by gentleman every way reliable. The painful, disgusting and extraordinary means resorted to for the purpose of exciting the exhausted sense of pleasure are truly wonderful.

The introduction of foreign bodies into the urethra and vagina, and their accidental escape into the bladder have been of frequent occurrence. Very many cases might be quoted from the best authors. But the most

remarkable of this class of cases is that reported by Chopart, of a shepherd who, after practicing masturbation many years, could no longer excite any pleasurable sensation by his ordinary manœuvres. One day, quite in despair, he suddenly cut a gash in the organ with a very dull knife and was surprised by a recurrence of the usual sensation of pleasure. He repeated these gashes until the member was completely divided along the whole course of the canal. Even now his abominable resources were not exhausted. He adopted the expedient of inserting a small stick into the remaining portion of the urethra; this at length slipped from his fingers and passed into the bladder. After enduring intolerable sufferings he was brought to the hospital and was operated on as for stone in the bladder.

It should also be borne in mind that this destructive habit may be contracted at a very early age and hence parental vigilance should know no slumber from infancy to maturity and more than ordinary care should be exercised at the age of purberty

when, as has been said, a "moral tempest" rages, especially in certain constitutions. Injurious as this habit is at any period of life, it is doubly so before the system has arrived at maturity; hence it becomes important that my readers shall be impressed with the fact that a premature development of the venereal passion is possible even in early infancy; and the practical importance of this truth is augmented by the fact that causes operating to this end, at that period of life, are generally subject to the control of those having charge of children. I know that the statement seems improbable and I have not wished to leave it in doubt, hence I deemed it proper to fortify the position by reference to cases which have been placed upon record by undoubted authority. I might here add many others but I hope the infantile cases quoted elsewhere will be sufficient to satisfy any reasonable mind. Whether the parent be convinced on this point or not it must be admitted by all that no harm can come from a close observation of all those causes to which masturbation

in very young subjects has been attributed. The unfounded objection that in our efforts to preserve we may possibly teach the vice to those we would save, cannot apply here as no teaching whatever is required at this early period; but vigilance and a prompt and careful removal of all those incentives to the vice already enumerated, must be rigidly enforced.

A great deal may be done calculated to repress the premature development of the passions. The modern system of education is particularly faulty in our country in failing to furnish the means of effecting this desirable end—it ignores the importance of measures tending to the full development of the physical powers. The intellect is forced from a tender age; and, not unfrequently, not only is there no systematic course pursued to give health and vigor to the body, without which the mind can never reach its highest point of excellence, but the absurd rules of the schools have a positive tendency to repress growth, and induce languor and debility. Infants are sent to

school, prisoners under tyrannical rule, to be confined to irksome positions calculated to excite the organs by over-heating, pressure, etc., for from seven to eight hours a day, when they should be permitted to follow the instincts of nature in active and vigorous exercise.

It is to be regretted that we have not yet been brought to appreciate the importance of gymnastic exercises; when we shall have reached this point a gymnasium will be considered a necessary appendage to every school and college, especially in cities; and teachers will become sensible that active sports are no less important than the lessons they are daily dinning into the feeble, wearied pupils who sit upon their benches. Look at the few statistics in regard to the occupations of those who have fallen victims to this vice. Almost always they have pursued sedentary employments; and, when one seems to have been an exception to this rule, a scrutiny into his antecedents will show that his activity has been more apparent than real.

There is no apology for this incessant effort to force the mind at the expense of the physical powers; and it is now a well established fact that this inconsiderate course most effectually defeats the end in view.

Mr. Edwin Chadwick has given us a useful lesson on this subject; so much the more reliable and valuable because it was learned by strict observation on large numbers.

Mr. Chadwick was appointed by the English Government to investigate the allegation that the young operatives in the great mills of that kingdom, were seriously injured by the excessive labor imposed upon them. The result was that the working time of children under thirteen was limited to six hours a day, while they were required to tend school three hours. Mr. Chadwick carefully investigated the working of this system; and he declares that he found these poor children more vigorous—mentally and physically—that they progressed more rapidly in their studies, and that they made, more readily, a practical application of their

knowledge than the full time scholars, who spent from six to eight hours a day in the same schools.

Mr. Chadwick also declares that the testimony of the most intelligent and experienced teachers is all to one point; that not more than two hours of the morning and one hour of the afternoon can be spent profitably in the school room by children under thirteen or fourteen years. If this be true how very faulty is the system usually pursued in our country.

Military institutes, now springing up in various sections of the country, are doing a good work. The regular drill is well calculated to relieve the wearied mind, while it is effective in developing the physical powers, imparts a manly bearing and induces habits of obedience, order and regularity. Where this system does not prevail gymnastic exercises and active sports may be adapted advantageously to the wants of children of both sexes.

The distinguished Superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane in Illinois in dis-

cussing this subject in his report for 1856 says; "So long as we have no national amusements whatever, so long as mirth and sport are considered exclusively as puerilities, so long as the college is without its gymnasium and its traditional sports, and the school house has no well trodden play ground, so long as man is an iron-bound and close riveted dollar-grinding automaton, which bends every moment at some false shrine of morality or respectability, just so long will the wards of American institutions for the insane be thronged with such subjects as we have described. If society will constantly wear its Sunday dress of enforced constraint it must pay for the privilege in such coin as violated nature chooses to exact."

Let the youthful then of both sexes have, as may be appropriate to each, more manual labor, more active exercise, more exhilarating and health-giving sports and fewer weary and unprofitable hours in the pent up school room, and one very effectual blow will have been given to the monstrous vice which is now so wide spread and destructive.

Muscular exercise carried to the point of fatigue is one of the most efficient means of repressing the ardent passions and preserving the vigor and purity of youth.

Closely connected with this point is the hygienic condition of children at home. Wealth has accumulated and luxurious habits have reached many, even below the middle class of society. I cannot but believe that indulgences allowed to the children of the present day have much to do in the frightful increase of self-pollution. It is most frequently found among the pampered sons and daughters of too indulgent parents. Rich and savory diet, downy beds, fashionable dress at an early age, vicious dances, the corruptions and vulgarities of the stage, novel reading, in all of which the youth of our times are freely indulged, are well calculated to enfeeble the body, while they give premature activity to the natural instincts. As these evils have become more common, their effects have become more manifest in the introduction of boys and girls into society at an age when our fathers would have

regarded their participation in such intercourse as an impertinent intrusion. No one can reflect for a moment on these things without the conviction that they all tend to place our youth in advance of what natural habits and temperate living would accomplish.

In early life the parent must be responsible for the removal of many of the causes which may result in disastrous consequences. No time should be lost in applying the proper remedies for removing all causes of irritation about the genitals—it matters not how slight—they may lead to destructive habits. The child should be closely watched and suitable means resorted to for the relief of eruptions about the organs; if worms exist in the lower bowel, measures should be promptly taken for their removal; if the child is inclined to rub or scratch the organ, no one should be satisfied until the cause is discovered and abated. If natural phimosis exists it will become the duty of the surgeon to afford relief. During infantile life no mother should repose too much confi-

dence in nurses; their habits should be closely scrutinized. I have said enough on this subject in the chapter on causes. In the same chapter I have given cases which will illustrate the fatal consequences of a very common idea that exposure of person in the presence of very young persons can do no injury. Too much care cannot be exercised in this respect—impressions may be made on the infant mind which will prove destructive in after life. I need not say how improper it is to permit the child to sleep with the nurse after it has reached an age when this is unnecessary and is permitted only as an indulgence.

Children of opposite sexes should never be put into the same bed; and at a very early age, they ought to be separated at night in different chambers.

Their positions and habits in bed should be closely scrutinized. Beware of the child who prefers the bed to the usual sports of childhood, who wishes to retire early, *seems* to fall asleep instantly, and yet pleads for indulgence in the morning. Watch his

motions as the child lies with covered head, listen to his breathing. Is it quick, hurried, gasping, sighing? There is danger lurking there. Feather beds ought to be excluded from the nursery, and much care exercised to adapt the clothing to the requirements of the season. Human nature is as easily forced as any plant that adorns the hot-house, and such forcing is a serious evil in every aspect in which it can be viewed. Children should never be indulged in lying abed awake. They should be required to rise early and immediately relieve the distended bladder, and thus remove a source of irritation. Custom too often requires children to retire at too early an hour; it would be far better if more attention were given to the proper hour of rising. The establishment of regular habits is certainly desirable; but the hour of retiring should be adapted to the age and requirements of each child; none should be put to bed for any other purpose than for sleep; if sleep does not promptly close the child's eyes it had better be any where else than in bed.

In regard to the means of prevention in those cases where natural phimosis exists or the prepuce has unusual length, I cannot do better than to adopt the opinion of that distinguished medical philosopher, Dr. Copland. He says: "There can be no doubt that the occurrence of this vice is remarkably favored by the physical condition of the male genitals, especially as regards the neglect of circumcision. I am convinced that the abrogation of this rite among christians has been injurious to them in religious, in moral, in physical, and in sanitary and constitutional points of view; that circumcision is most salutary, as respects not only the individual, but also the female whom he marries and his offspring."

It is very important, whatever may be the demands of inexorable fashion, to clothe youths in such a manner as to avoid too much pressure on the genital organs, nor should these organs be over heated. When woollen goods are worn the pants should be lined to prevent irritating friction of the parts. These may appear to be but small

matters, but we cannot be too guarded, for we know not how soon the lightest spark may cause an explosion. Aside from any reference to vice no young female should habitually use soft and heating cushions to sit upon—they not unfrequently induce diseases which have rendered the lives of many females miserable.

I have spoken of certain fashionable amusements and among them of certain dances. Doubtless many persons indulge in these and escape contamination—retiring from the warm embrace and giddy whirl as pure in thought and feeling as when the first step was taken; but a certain number do fall victims to the propensities of our nature awakened prematurely by such contact. Suppose a thousand pass unscathed while one falls a victim; no one can say in advance who will escape and who will be ruined. The risk is too great and is accompanied by no compensating advantage. All familiarities which bring the youthful sexes into contact and tend to break down the prudent barriers which should separate them, ought to

be carefully discouraged as dangerous stimulants to that propensity of our nature which needs neither cultivation or incentive to action.

I will not caution parents against permitting their children to read obscene books or to see obscene pictures—these will be prohibited as far as possible; but look at your library, take up the beautifully bound volume on your center table and see if there is not there a deadly poison to the purity of mind of youth, tolerated because it is the production of genius? Is there not in the volume much that no young girl can read without a blush—no youth can peruse without improper emotions?

This vice is very prevalent in colleges. How much of it may be due to the study of certain portions of the classics, which it were well for the world if they had been irrecoverably lost in the dark ages, I cannot say, but no one can doubt, the injurious tendency of such studies. We have laws against the publication and sale of obscene books and yet the press teems with those

little less destructive of the morals of old and young. Much of this vicious matter constitutes a part of the British classics also, and no one has yet ventured to extract the poison and give to the world an edition which a prudent parent might wish to see in the hands of his children.

It should be recollected that this is a contagious vice and all the associations of youth ought to be known to the guardian, and such as are improper broken up. It is the more important to give this caution, as many persons, addicted to the vice, are otherwise unexceptionable in morals, and many who seem to be most fit and desirable companions, often practice it in connection with outward moral observances and hypocritical sanctity. If the characteristics of the vice have become apparent, as already described, an observant parent will detect them and may save his child. But as this may not have happened there is no certain protection but in giving to youth at a proper age some appropriate instruction in regard to the habit, and make him understand the

direful evils that it induces. Of all the numerous cases that have fallen into my hands I have never known one who became a masturbator with a knowledg of its consequences; while I have known many to abstain after proper instruction had been given. Some very conscientious persons have indulged in the habit believing it to be innocent and harmless. Moral and religious appeals may exert great influence wth these; once convinced that it is criminal in the sight of God, subversive of purity of character and injurious alike to body and mind, they will no more persist in the practice than in the commission of any other sin. All youths should be taught that purity of character is essential to human happiness; that "the excesses of youth are so many conspiracies against old age;" and that of all the violations of natural laws none are more corrupting and debasing than self-pollution. Cursed in the person of Onan, by the direct visitation of God, the curse continues to rest upon its victims to the present day; enfeebling the body, perverting the affec-

tive functions, polluting the moral faculties and destroying the intellect. He who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with the least degree of allowance has pronounced a blighting, withering curse on this unhal-
lowed practice, and those who pursue it will inevitably meet the doom of the transgressor and experience in their own persons the frightful consequences of a departure from moral rectitude. Properly taught there are few who will not flee from practices which can be followed only by remorse, the contempt of mankind, disease and death. The protecting power of knowledge is indisputable before the vicious habit is formed; and it has not unfrequently reclaimed the guilty after the infirmities, which poison the joys and curse the days and nights of the masturbator, had begun to make their appearance. This will be the result in almost every case if insanity or fatuity has not been already induced, or the intellectual powers too much enfeebled and the moral sensibilities blunted.

I have said that this vice abounds in col-

leges and boarding schools, and calls for profound investigation of the means most likely to abate the evil. Lallemand says: "If I may judge from my own observation, out of ten persons whose health has been deranged immediately or remotely from the effects of masturbation, nine first contracted the habit at school." All that I have read on the subject has led me to conclude that this proportion is not exaggerated. No parent should place a child in such institutions without a due regard to the kind of accommodations furnished, and a proper selection of room-mates. With all the care that can be taken by the most prudent there is yet danger and a great deal of responsibility devolves upon teachers. With a proper knowledge of the subject, a confirmed masturbator will exhibit unmistakable evidences of the practice; and, suspicion once aroused, the culprit may be readily detected, and should be instantly dismissed. Nothing should induce a moment's hesitation, as it is one of the most contagious of all vices. The teacher has no right to incur the haz-

ard of attempting a cure; this is difficult in all cases, and requires a considerable length of time, during which many others may be contaminated. Let the unfortunate victim go home to the care of the parent and the family physician, whose united efforts may suffice to save him from further degradation, and perhaps restore him to health and virtue.

Professors in colleges and school teachers should inform themselves of the characteristics of this vice. If they discover a youth in ill health; pale, feeble, with downcast looks, jealous and suspicious, irritable and easily offended with his best friends, disposed to solitude, imperfect memory, a habit of talking to himself or laughing without cause, no pains should be spared to ascertain his habits, in order, if, as is probable, he is a masturbator, he may not have an opportunity to corrupt his fellows. If this cannot be ascertained the teacher may at least warn him by a lecture on the vice and its consequences, given to the whole class.

I am satisfied that large dormitories, well

constructed for ventilation, would be a very great improvement on the present method of crowding three or four boys or girls into a small room. One of the teachers should occupy a bed in the same apartment, or in a chamber so situated that all that occurs in the room may be observed; and, to enable him to do so at any moment, a taper light should burn during the night. Children are left too much to themselves in their sports and at night; it would be far better if they were joined in the former by their seniors and encouraged, and if they were under stricter surveillance during the hours of rest. Some such system would lessen the chances for corrupting conversation, for improper reading, and, in no small measure, curtail the power of the vicious in diffusing a knowledge of his accursed art. This may be deprecated as a system of espionage; but it is not so in any odious sense. Children are incapable of self-direction, and are hence the proper subjects of guardianship and protection; and it is the duty of parents and teachers to have an eye

to every act until the mind is sufficiently informed and the judgment matured to determine the propriety of any course they may choose to pursue..

CONCLUSION—This little work is not written for the profession, and hence, I do not pretend to give the treatment required to effect a cure, where the habit has been once established. It would be manifestly improper to do so in a popular work, the sole purpose of which is to inculcate preventive measures and if possible to reclaim those who have already sinned. None but medical men can apply the varied treatment demanded by the multifarious diseases engendered by this pernicious practice, and none others should essay the difficult task. I will, however, make a single observation for the benefit of those who may have already contracted the habit. *No plan of treatment will avail you any thing without an unreserved abandonment of the practice.* Do not deceive yourself. The drunkard had as well hope to escape the effects of intemper-

ance, without abstinence from intoxicating drink, as for the masturbator to be restored to health and the enjoyment of his faculties, while persisting, ever so moderately, in his vicious course. As therefore you value your own health, character and life—as you hope to attain fame, wealth or position in society—as you have regard to your self-esteem, without which you cannot but be miserable; or the respect of others, without which life is but a burden, arrest your self in your course; cast off the demon that is devouring you and you may yet be restored to manly vigor, mental and physical—regain all those attributes which ennoble and adorn the character of a virtuous man and impart happiness and serenity to the evening of life.

Having determined to abandon the sinful and filthy practice, confide yourself to your physician, concealing no part of your past history, and he will aid you in the difficult task of reformation, and may afford you relief from many of the consequences of your folly.



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