

currence, called on her at the hotel at which they were stopping during their wedding tour to New York. I found her to be a very sensible woman, not at all ethereal, but anxious to do her share towards relieving her husband from his embarrassing position, of which she only half comprehended the character.

I requested her to be a little more free in her manner with her husband than she had yet been, and told her I thought that if she pursued that course there would be no further disappointment, but that she was not to act as though she had received any instruction from me, but rather as though she was disregarding what I had said to her. The details, of course, I left to her own good sense and womanly feeling. The plan was eminently successful, as her husband told me with great glee the next day. "She told me," he said, "that she did not want any doctors about her; that she could settle this affair herself." "The rest," he continued, "is confidential between her and me, but, by Heaven, it reminded me of old times!" It is scarcely necessary to add that there was no further trouble.

In another case, the patient, a gentleman who had been married several years, and had lived happily with a wife to whom he was much attached, found himself absolutely without desire, in a new house he had built for himself. He had, when he consulted me, lived in his new mansion six or seven months, and in all that time had experienced no desire for intercourse. He was about thirty years of age, and his wife twenty-five.

He consulted me, supposing that there was some nervous trouble threatening the extinction of his virile powers. I found, however, on examination, that the organs were in a perfectly normal condition, that he had strong erections at times, and had had several nocturnal emissions. I suggested that, probably, he was like the boy who had spelt well in the old school-house, but who, when reproved by his teacher for retrograding in his orthography, replied that "he could not get the hang of the new school-house." At first, he doubted the correctness of this explanation, but upon reflection became satisfied that I was right. To "make assurance doubly sure," he went, with his wife, to the other house, which was awaiting a tenant, and passing a night there, was very soon convinced that the former state of affairs could be easily restored. What to do, however, was the next question. To go back to his old residence was out of the question, and to live, as it appeared to him, he would have to live in the new one, was not to be thought of. I advised that he should move all the bed-room furniture from his chamber in the old house to the one he occupied in the new, and to otherwise fit up the room as nearly as possible like the one to which he had been so long accustomed. He at once saw the propriety of this suggestion, and, adopting it, had no further trouble. Piece by piece, after a few months, he displaced the old furniture, and this without any sacrifice of his normal desires.

Besides these classes of impotents, complete and par-

tial, from the absence of desire, there are others, in whom the condition is irregularly induced, through religious observance or superstition, and in whom it becomes permanent through a long continuance of sexual abstinence. Thus, members of the priesthood in certain denominations, who devote themselves to a life of celibacy and self-abnegation, eventually become absolutely free from desire, and consequently impotent. The same is true of whole sects, whose religious worship requires an entire abstinence from sexual intercourse. Before the stage is reached at which desire is abolished, great suffering is sometimes undergone, as was, for instance, the case with St. Anthony and others of those with whom the complete annihilation of sexual inclinations was considered an act agreeable to God. In regard to the Shakers, who profess to abstain from intercourse, and who probably do so, in most cases, the following account exhibits, to some extent, the state of mind and body thereby induced.

"An old Shaker, called Father Abijah Worster (who had been anointed Father in Mother Ann's day), a native of Harvard, Mass., and well known to the inhabitants of that town, told me, that one time some of his relatives entered and clung to him. I will relate his story; yet, if I had his words, I should lack the deep tone of thrilling horror which invariably accompanied the recital of such scenes by these visionary people. He says:

"As I was tossing, tumbling, rolling, jumping, throw-

ing myself against the wall, the chimney, the floor, the chairs, in fact, everything that did not keep out of the way, I felt that my blood was boiling, and every bone in my body was being sawn asunder; my flesh pinched with hot irons, and every hair on my head was a stinging reptile. I had laid me down to die, when Mother Ann came along, saying, 'Why, Abijah, there are some of the worst looking spirits on your shoulders I ever saw in my life.' I crawled along and laid me down at her feet, and prayed her, in mercy, to help me; she raised me up, and made a few resolute passes, from my head to my feet, with her hands, and I was relieved at once—and I have never doubted since; that,' he added, 'was the power of God in Mother.'

"This good old man died in 1839, upwards of ninety years of age; he related to me, as a REMARKABLE FACT, a few weeks before his death, that he had gained a complete dominion over all the passions of the first Adam. The young and beautiful, old and withered, were the same to him." *

A patient who had voluntarily reduced himself to impotence by restraining his desires, was, several years since, under my charge. Originally of strong passions, he had, when about attaining his majority, made a vow to follow the example of Mani, and to abstain from all voluntary sexual excitement. He devoted himself to the study of philosophy, with the view of founding a

* Extract from an unpublished Manuscript on Shaker History. By an Eye-Witness. Boston, 1850.

sect, which should be purer in their lives than any that had previously existed. He began by curbing the sexual passions, and proposed, by degrees, to suppress all appetites, except those absolutely necessary to the existence of the individual, and these were to be indulged in to the lowest extent consistent with the preservation of life. As I have said, he was of strong sexual feeling, and for a long time he suffered very acutely. Libidinous images were constantly before him, and his dreams were only of sexual matters, of all possible variety. During this period, nocturnal emissions were common occurrences. The deprivation was soon calculated to excite disturbance, from the fact, that up to the period of his vow, he had indulged freely and had kept a mistress from the time that he was seventeen years old. Finally he succeeded in overcoming the sexual appetite, and he was able to pursue his studies with more assiduity than had previously been the case. He made a voyage to India, in order to perfect himself in certain branches of knowledge which he thought he could not study thoroughly at home. During his travels he was repeatedly thrown into company with attractive women, but he had so thoroughly conquered his sexual feelings, that they were to him, as he said, no more than logs of wood. He remained absent seven years, but had entirely abandoned all idea of forming a philosophical sect. Indeed, his travels had cured him, very effectually, of a good many absurd notions which he had contracted; among others, that of perpetual celibacy. As

he was a man of wealth, and his fondness for society had returned, he thought he would marry, but was apprehensive that he would not, owing to his lengthened period of continence, be able to perform the part of a husband in the marriage relation. During the whole time that he had been abroad he had had no connection, no nocturnal emissions, no lascivious dreams, and no erections based upon sexual desire. He had no other object in marrying than to obtain a home and its comforts, but would forego the idea if he was incapable of intercourse.

Upon examination I found that the genital organs were of normal form and condition, and, therefore, that no obstacle, so far as they were concerned, existed. Except for his assurance that he never experienced erections nor desire I should have pronounced him competent, but, in the face of his declarations, I was satisfied that he was suffering from mental impotence, and that his cure would have to be effected by moral means. I advised him to enter society, and to try to fix his affections upon some virtuous and attractive woman whom he would be satisfied to marry, and to wait patiently for the re-development of his sexual desires. He had no faith, however, in that plan of treatment, but went off, on his own responsibility, into all kinds of attempted sexual excesses. Several months afterward he returned, with the information that he was actually and permanently impotent. No excitements which he had employed had sufficed to induce

in him the slightest desire, and his condition, therefore, was a great deal worse than it had been. He had exhausted the means in an irregular way, which, had he followed my advice, would, there was reason to hope, have been gradually efficacious. Moreover, in his attempts at intercourse, he had contracted a chancre, and was already suffering from secondary manifestations. He was placed upon anti-syphilitic treatment, but soon afterward went to the Hot Springs of Arkansas, and, while in the West, married a prostitute, who wanted his money, and who had persuaded him she could cure him. I believe he is still living somewhere, but am quite sure there has been no return of sexual desire.

In this case there was a loss of power as well as of desire, and hence a double cause for the impotence which existed. The origin, however, was clearly in abolition of desire, the loss of power being a secondary phenomenon.

Treatment.—The treatment of cases in which, from any cause, the normal sexual desire of the individual has been lessened or abolished to such a degree as to render intercourse impossible, has been to a great extent indicated in the preceding pages, when each case has been under consideration. In general terms, it consists in the use of the bromides, in those instances in which there has been excess in any unnatural direction, such as pederasty, masturbation, or mental intercourse; and in the employment of such moral means in

them and in the other classes of cases as each particular instance may seem to require. Roubaud treated the case I have quoted from him by requiring his patient to take a full dose of tincture of cantharides, and then while under its influence to attempt connection with a dark woman who was without corset, gaiter boots and a silk robe. The attempt failed, but the effect upon the genital organs of the patient was such that he begged for another dose, satisfied that at the next experiment success would be attained. Fearful of exciting too intense a degree of cystitis, Roubaud, while pretending to give him cantharides gave him a potion free from this substance. The expectant attention of the patient was, however, so aroused that this dose had as strong an effect as the other, and he finally succeeded through the indirect influence (for it was absolutely inert), in effecting intercourse with a brunette without a corset. The confidence of the patient, however, in the medicine was so great that he was not willing to dispense with it, and though he continued to have sexual relations with dark women he always took his potion.

In the employment of moral means or those acting through the mind of the patient, nothing is of more importance than to give him confidence in himself, and in the means which may be adopted for his relief. If this point can be secured the battle is half won; without it victory is always doubtful.

And again, great delicacy is generally required in all

efforts intended to act through the mind which may be directed to the re-awakening of the physiological desire for sexual intercourse. In my experience the society of respectable women is ultimately more efficacious than that of loose women and prostitutes. In cases of simple loss of desire, the power is not materially effected: it is the inclination alone which is wanting, just as a man may possess good digestive powers, and yet have no appetite. Now, the sexual feeling is much more apt to be provoked by a woman impossible to be obtained without marriage than by one who can be had for the asking, or for a sum of money. The appetite, like that for the good things of the table, is whetted by the difficulties that are in the way, and hence the object is obtained by natural means under the regulations which law and social life impose. Of course there are cases, such as some of those described in this chapter, for whom it is impossible to recommend the society of virtuous women. They are altogether too infamous in habits and principles for the physician to think of subjecting decent women to their companionship. But there are others to whom this stigma is not applicable, and who, but for the refuge which the society of virtuous women is capable of affording, and the prospect held out of making a marriage, would either go over to prostitutes or ruin themselves with masturbation or other irregular sexual practices.

CHAPTER II.

ABSENCE OF THE POWER OF ERECTION AND OF CONSEQUENT INTROMISSION.

There are many more cases of impotence met with under this head than all others combined. It is the trouble, therefore, with the great majority of men who consult a physician or surgeon in order that their virile powers may be restored to them. No cause is, according to my experience, so destructive to the happiness of the average man as the loss of his virile power, while his desire still exists not measurably impaired. He may be abstinent, but at the same time if he discovers that he is sexually impotent, though he may not care to exercise his powers once a month, his peace of mind is interfered with to an extent that no other disease is capable of causing.

In impotence arising from the condition in question there is an impossibility of entering the vagina with the male organ owing to the fact that the latter remains in a state of flaccidity. This state may be the result of one or more of several causes, of which the following are the chief:

Early Sexual Excesses.—Perhaps of all the causes of failure of sexual power in adult life the induction of the sexual orgasm during infancy or youth is the