

most frequent. The fact that voluptuous sensations can be excited in children who are yet in their nurses' arms is well known to physicians, who are often called upon to treat affections of the nervous system which are the direct result of such excitation. Epilepsy, chorea, and spinal diseases, causing paralysis, sometimes have this cause as their factor and the groundwork may be laid for still more deplorable conditions which are developed in after life. Into the consideration of these effects it does not come within the scope of this work to enter or to consider them at all except so far as they relate to sexual impotence.

It is a law of the organism that any function which is over-exerted before the organs producing it are fully matured is certain to lead to the derangement or even extinction of that function. A child whose brain is over-taxed by studies, which are in advance of those suitable for an immature brain, runs serious risks of becoming epileptic or imbecile. Another, who is set to the performance of physical work of too severe a character, is arrested in its growth, and becomes puny and feeble; and it is equally certain that a like result, so far as regards the generative system, will follow on a too early excitation of the sexual organs. In very young infants it is sometimes the case that in order to sooth them nurses titillate the genital organs and thus produce sensations which are agreeable and which are subsequently desired. Eventually the operation is performed by the child, and, being continued through

the period of puberty, leads to complete impotence from loss of power, and often from loss of desire also.

In such cases as these the ordinary manual excitation of the penis generally after a time becomes insufficient to produce an emission, and various processes are resorted to to provoke the requisite degree of excitability to cause a seminal ejaculation. From a very early period in the history of medicine the effects of early excesses have been thoroughly recognized. Hippocrates, in speaking of the disease now known as locomotor ataxia, or tabes dorsalis, says:\*

"This disease attacks young married people or those given to venereal excesses. There is no fever, and although they may eat a sufficient amount of food, they become emaciated. They have sensations of ants crawling along them, and every time that they go to stool or urinate they lose a certain quantity of their seminal fluid; they are incapable of generation, and they often have the sexual orgasm in their sleep."

I cite this extract from Hippocrates merely for the purpose of showing that he recognized the fact that early sexual excesses lead to impotence, and not with the least intention of endorsing the rest of what he has said, much of which is clearly incorrect. This, however, will engage our attention further on.

Celsus† declares that the pleasures of love, if indulged

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\* De Morbis, Lib. 2, Cap. xlix.

† De Re medica, Lib. 1, Cap. ix.

in to excess, are always injurious to weak persons, and exhaust the vital powers.

Aretæus \* says: "Young people who are excessive in sexual matters acquire the appearance and diseases of the aged. They become pale, effeminate, indisposed to physical exertion, stupid and even imbecile. They are bent forward, their legs can no longer support them, they have a distaste for everything, they are incapable of everything and often they become paralytics.

Tissot, † among other evils of masturbation, calls attention to the facts that the organs of generation experience a large share of the evils of which they are the first cause. Many patients become incapable of having erection, and with others the seminal fluid is discharged by the slightest contact, and at the least approach to an erection. The same author, in referring to the early initiation of some children into the vice of masturbation, says: ‡ "It is proper to state that onanism is particularly dangerous in the cases of infants, and at any time before the age of puberty. Happily, it is not common to find monsters of either sex who commit this outrage upon them, but it is too true that they often commit it themselves." Again, in reference to the intervention of impotence as the result of masturbation, he lays special stress

\* De Signis et Causarum.

† "L'Onanisme: Dissertation sur les maladies produites par la masturbation." Paris, 1805, p. 21.

‡ Op. cit., p. 81.

upon the fact that a kind of paralysis of the organs of generation is produced, and hence an impossibility of procuring erections.

Deslandes \* relative to sexual excesses, says: "As a final result the sensibility of the generative organs may be exhausted and may disappear. The manœuvres, which in the beginning had led promptly to the desired result, become incapable of reawakening a sensation, which little by little has become weaker, and at last annihilated. They may still be able to cause an erection of the penis, and even to produce a painful state of priapism, but they no longer cause the pleasure which they formerly induced. It would be better, when this kind of paralysis occurs, that the recollection of previous pleasures could be abolished, but it mercilessly remains, and it is that alone which prompts the unhappy individual to continue abuses. Tormented by this remembrance, the *blasé* masturbator provokes his turgid organs. Obtaining no satisfactory results in his methods, he invents new ones, which are at the same time eccentric, monstrous, and horrible. The thoughts which he once entertained were candid and innocent compared to those which now fill his mind, and the onanism he once practiced is almost a praiseworthy act beside that in which he indulges. The bare hand, which formerly sufficed to produce the orgasm, is no longer competent to that end, and the surface of the

\* "De l'onanisme et des autres abus veneriens considerés dans leurs rapports avec la santé." Paris, 1805, p. 274.

penis, where previously the sensibility was situated, is now exhausted of its capacity to yield pleasure, and he is forced to seek it more profoundly where his hand has not yet reached; operations which would have formerly been regarded as causing torture are now performed without hesitation, at the dictation of the power within him. He wounds and tears the parts, recoiling at nothing, providing he can be made to feel. This condition lasts until these dangerous expedients in their turn fail, either because they eventually lose their power or because of the grave accidents which they produce."

Chopart relates the particulars of a case which is one of the most striking of the whole range of the clinical history of the subject, and which, as showing the terrible extremes to which masturbators may go, is worth citing in the present connection:

A shepherd of Languedoc, Gabriel Gallien, abandoned himself to masturbation at the age of fifteen, committing the act as many as fifteen times a day. Eventually he reached the point at which ejaculation rarely took place, sometimes continuing his efforts for an hour before emission occurred. It often happened to him to go into convulsions while he was perpetrating the act of masturbation, and to emit a few drops of blood instead of semen. For eleven years he used only his hands, but at about his twenty-sixth year, not being able to produce the ordinary sensation by this means, he adopted the expedient of introducing a

piece of wood about six inches long into the urethra several times every day. For sixteen years he made use of this procedure, but finally the lining membrane of the urethra became hard, callous, and altogether insensible; the piece of wood no longer answered the purpose which it had accomplished; he had a continual erection which nothing could dissipate.

During all this time he had an insuperable aversion to women, a by no means rare circumstance with masturbators; he became melancholic, neglected his work, and thought only of the means of satisfying his desires. Desperate, and attaining no success with the many expedients to which he had recourse, he one day decided to make an incision with his knife through the glans and in the direction of the urethra. This operation, far from causing him pain, procured him an agreeable sensation and produced an abundant seminal emission. From that time, happy in having made a discovery which permitted him to satisfy his inclinations, he often repeated the same experiment, and always with the same result.

After having performed this horrible mutilation perhaps a thousand times, the unfortunate wretch found that he had divided the penis from the meatus to the symphysis pubis into two equal parts. When hæmorrhage was particularly great, he arrested it by tying a cord around the penis. The corpora cavernosa, separated as they were, were equally capable of erection, but they diverged to the right and left. When the pe-

nis was divided as far as the symphysis the knife was no longer useful, and then there were new provisions, new chagrins, new attempts to obtain the pleasure he craved. Among the expedients to which he resorted was one with a piece of wood shorter than the one he had previously used, and which he introduced into the part of the urethra which remained to him. He thus succeeded in exciting the very orifices of the ejaculatory ducts and in causing an emission of semen. For ten years this procedure satisfied him, until one day he was so careless in the use of his stick of wood that it escaped from his fingers and slipped into his bladder. At once he experienced great pain, and all the efforts he made to expel the foreign body were without success. Finally, after intense suffering from retention of urine and hæmorrhage from the bladder, he consulted a surgeon, who was of course greatly astonished to find, instead of a single penis, two, each as large as the original. The great pain felt by the patient decided the surgeon to perform the operation of lithotomy, which having done he extracted the piece of wood—which from having been three months in the bladder was deeply incrustated with calcareous matter. After some serious drawbacks the patient recovered from the operation, but died about three months subsequently of phthisis, due to his long-continued and frequently repeated excesses.

Other cases have been recorded in which wounds have been inflicted for the purpose of re-exciting an

organ whose excitability to the ordinary stimulus was exhausted, but none on record equal this remarkable instance of the French shepherd. It is, however, from the more common examples that the greatest amount of knowledge is to be obtained and the proper deductions drawn; and hence the relation of a few additional ones, as recorded by others, and one or two from my own experience, will not be out of place in the present connection.

Deslandés refers to the case of a school teacher, who titillated the urethra by foreign bodies in order to obtain an emission. He generally used an iron wire, which he took the precaution to bend over at the end, so as to form a hook and thus avoid injury as far as possible to the lining membrane. One day, while engaged in the use of this instrument, and being a little more excited in his movements than usual, the hook caught in the wall of the canal and could not be withdrawn. He made many attempts, all of which failed; but still, notwithstanding his sufferings, shame prevented him from applying to a surgeon. He bent the distal end of the wire into the form of a ring so as to be able to exercise greater traction, but still he could not succeed, and in the midst of his exertions the ring was pulled off and the wire remained in the urethra. Driven then to despair and fearing death, he applied to a surgeon, Monsieur Fardeau, of Saumur.

The penis was found to be enormously swollen, as was also the skin of the scrotum. All the tissues which are

found at the point of insertion of the penis to the pubis were also in a state of great tumefaction, hot and painful. The abdomen was beginning to be tympanitic, there was a suppression of urine, the countenance was ruddy and the eyes suffused, the mind was beginning to wander, the pulse was hard, frequent, and small. Monsieur Fardeau took hold of the projecting wire, and, making traction on it, became satisfied that the other end was fast to some solid substance. Exploring the part with the greatest circumspection, he was not surprised to find that the hook was fixed in the internal border of the tuberosity of the ischium. An incision was made in this region, the hook was seen, and the wire was extracted by the perineum. The patient was at once relieved, and his health was completely re-established.

M. Sarailé\* reports the case of a man fifty years old, who for three years had masturbated with a darning-needle, which he introduced into the urethra. One day while using it, it escaped from his fingers and disappeared within the canal. Eight days afterwards it was extracted by an operation, after the patient had undergone much suffering.

Several cases in which masturbation by the urethra, when the excitation of the glans no longer sufficed to produce the orgasm, have come under my notice. In all the act had been begun at an early age, and had been frequently performed daily before the sensibility

\* "Journal de med., chir. et pharm.," t. xxviii. p. 290.

of the glans was lost. In one of these instances the patient, a young man twenty-three years of age, had practised masturbation excessively from the time that he was nine years old. At about his fifteenth year the sensibility of the glans was nearly extinct, and, though emissions could be produced, the voluptuous sensations were almost nothing, and erection was very imperfect. He then began to make use of a penholder made of hard rubber, which he introduced to the extent of two or three inches into the urethra. In the course of three or four years this resource began to fail him. The lining membrane had also lost its sensibility, and had become thick and dense. He then procured a No. 3 gum-elastic catheter, which, being of less diameter than the penholder, admitted of being more readily introduced. This sufficed for several years, but eventually it also lost its power. During all this time, although he continued to work at his trade, that of plumbing, he suffered from many forms of derangement of his nervous system, such as headache, tremor, dimness of sight, deafness, and neuralgic pains in various parts of his body. He had never had sexual intercourse, and was altogether incapable of the act. At times he would suffer from violent erections, accompanied by intense pain in the genital organs and in the back, and occasionally by wandering of the mind; and in the course of ten or more hours these would be relieved by an emission of semen, usually during the night, and without the accompaniment of a dream or

any voluptuous sensation. For this condition he had consulted a surgeon, who had cauterized the spine with a white-hot iron, and given him the bromide of potassium, both very proper means. Finally, under the continued use of the bromide, he was greatly relieved. He had not recovered his virile power when he came under my notice. The penis was very small, and had not, so he informed me, been in the state of erection for over five years, not even the merely physical erection due to lying on the back or to an over-distended bladder. He had now become a master plumber and was anxious to marry, and it was for the cure of his impotence that he came under my care. It may suffice now to say, what will be dwelt upon at greater length hereafter, that he regained a sufficient degree of sexual power to admit of his marrying and having connection.

In another case the termination was not so fortunate. In this instance the patient had masturbated as far back as he could recollect, and when quite an infant was used by his nurse, a mulatto woman, to satisfy her sexual desires; frequently he would procure the orgasm a dozen or more times in the day, but after the age of puberty, when seminal emissions began to occur, he did not practice the act so often. He never, however, that he could recollect, went a whole day without masturbating two or three times.

At the age of twenty-one he was still practising the act, though with very little satisfaction, for the erec-

tions were very feeble, and the emissions scarcely caused the faintest voluptuous feeling. He began now to make experiments with himself, and at once obtained an increase of pleasure from the use of a hair glove which he wore, and which by its roughness served to produce a sufficient amount of sensibility in the glans; but finally this failed, as in their turn all devices do under such circumstances, and he was at a loss how to obtain the pleasure which was a craving night and day.

At last he thought it would answer the purpose if he lubricated his hand with strong ammoniacal liniment. He at once acted upon the suggestion, and finding it to be successful, adopted the plan, generally, however, being obliged to increase the strength of the liniment by adding an additional quantity of ammonia to it. The sensation produced upon the glans penis by this agent, so far from being painful, was the chief source of his pleasure, but the local effects were such as to cause him a certain degree of anxiety. Inflammation attended with great swelling and redness set in from the first, and every time that he employed the application the manifestations of serious disturbance became more marked, and they were not by any means limited to the penis, for there were a high degree of fever and more or less mental implication, consisting of hallucinations both of sight and hearing. At last a large ulcer was produced, which involved the whole of the anterior surface of the glans, and which ultimately resulted in

the sloughing of the prepuce, and of a considerable portion of the glans. The production of the orgasm, by some means or other, had, however, become absolutely necessary to him, and notwithstanding the fact that a gangrenous ulcer included more than one third of the penis he continued to apply strong ammonia to the raw surface and to obtain pleasure from the act.

Hitherto he had managed to keep his proceedings a secret from his family; but about this time exposure took place from spots of blood and pus being observed on his linen, and which he had forgotten to wash off. On being detected he made a full avowal to his father and with much apparent contrition and mental suffering begged that he might be cured of his infatuation. He left his home in company with his father to place himself under my care. At Fall River he got on board the steamboat that was just about to leave for New York, and at his request had a state-room apart from that of his father assigned him, pleading in excuse that the odor from his ulcer was such as to render it impossible for his father to be in close quarters with him without being rendered very uncomfortable. He pledged himself not to attempt masturbation. He entered the room at about nine o'clock at night, and that was the last that has ever been seen of him. In the morning the room was found empty, the bed not having been occupied. It was supposed by his father, who gave me the foregoing details, that he repeated the act of masturbation, and that, filled with remorse, he

had thrown himself into the water. During his whole life he had always manifested the most intense distaste for the society of women, and had informed his father that he had never felt the slightest desire for sexual intercourse.

Of course the earlier sexual excesses are initiated, the greater is the probability that impotence will be the result in after-life. It is very certain that there is a much greater precocity in this respect even among civilized nations than is probably believed, but which a little reflection will suffice to convince one does really exist. The practice which prevails among the very poorest classes, of men, women, and children occupying the same room, and not infrequently the same bed, irresistibly leads to an undue and early development of the sexual appetite. I have myself seen in the city of New York, boys and girls three or four years of age attempt intercourse in the manner in which they had seen their elders perform it, and this without the slightest idea that they were doing anything wrong, and in the very presence of their fathers and mothers, without any other reprimand than a laughing rebuke. In New Mexico, I have seen the like attempts made in the streets, and with the applause and encouragement of men and women. Acts of masturbation by mere children were at the time of which I speak, thirty years ago, commonly practised in the presence of adults without even attracting attention. The men of that Territory were noted for their impotence, and were often