

**Human element in sex : being a medical inquiry into the relation of sexual physiology to Christian morality.**

**Contributors**

Blackwell, Elizabeth, 1821-1910.

**Publication/Creation**

London : Churchill, 1894.

**Persistent URL**

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THE  
HUMAN ELEMENT  
IN SEX

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ACCESSION NUMBER

306495

PRESS MARK

TP. CA (2)



22500271274

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2/6



Washington Interest

12/6

CV

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THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN SEX





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THE  
HUMAN ELEMENT IN SEX

BEING

A MEDICAL INQUIRY INTO THE RELATION OF SEXUAL  
PHYSIOLOGY TO CHRISTIAN MORALITY

BY

DR ELIZABETH BLACKWELL

NEW EDITION



LONDON  
J. & A. CHURCHILL  
11, NEW BURLINGTON STREET

1894





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## INTRODUCTION

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THIS work is written from the standpoint of the Christian physiologist.

The essence of all religions is the recognition of an Authority higher, more comprehensive, more permanent than the human being. The characteristic of Christian teaching, however, is the faith that this Supreme Authority is beneficent as well as powerful. The Christian believes that the Creative Force is a moral force, of more comprehensive morality than the human being that it creates. Under the symbol of a wise and loving parent—the most just, efficient, and attractive image that we know of—we are encouraged to regard this unseen Authority as being in direct relation with every atom of creation, and as desirous of drawing each atom into progressively higher forms of existence.

The Christian physiologist, therefore, knowing that there is a wise and beneficent purpose in the human structure, seeks to find out the laws and methods



of action by means of which human function may accomplish its highest use.

This task can only be carried out gradually. Ultimate function is not revealed by structure, nor ultimate use by function.

The empty arteries did not suggest the circulation of the blood to ancient physiologists, nor did the curious arrangements of the intestinal canal explain the complicated function of digestion. Ignorance of facts, preconceived notions, or fanciful theories as to "vital spirits," "cold and hot humours," &c., long delayed the attainment of correct knowledge of physiological facts.

Neither does physical knowledge of individual function reveal the developed use of which it is capable. The new life that may be given through touch to the blind, or the destruction of a nation through its vices, is not revealed by the minutest examination of the mechanism of touch, or the physical structure of the nervous system. Function and use are only proved by observation, reflection, and rational experiment patiently carried on age after age, with generalisation based upon accurate and accumulated facts.

Structure, function, and extended use, although closely connected, are, nevertheless, separate branches of inquiry. Applied physiology comprehends them all. Function is the arrangement by means of which the independent life of the sentient being is carried on and maintained. Developed function or use includes the growth and improvement of the individual



in relation to his fellows, and to existence outside his own personality.

No physiological truth is more firmly established than the fact that we can modify the action of our physical organs towards the special objects related to them, by the way in which we use our organs. By long-continued and careful study of the apparatus and processes of digestion, the physiologist has discovered the general plan by means of which food is converted into the substance of the body, and the part which each portion of the complicated digestive system takes in the maintenance of daily life. He does not stop, however, with this discovery of the general plan by which food is converted into flesh. He studies the way in which our habits of eating and drinking may destroy or improve the power of digestion, and recognises the effects which various kinds of food and drink may exercise upon the character of the individual and the race. The physiologist, therefore, proceeds to investigate, as a direct branch of necessary human physiological inquiry, the influence which the consumption of flesh or fruit, of alcohol or water, of warm or cold articles, of quantity or quality, &c., exerts upon the unique organisation of the human being, in producing health or disease in mankind; or upon the power of self-control or endurance, with the promotion of ferocious or genial tendencies in Man. Both human strength and human character can be affected by enlarged knowledge and control of the uses which belong to the digestive system.



What is true of the effects of food is equally true of the effect of every other physical condition of human life. It is, therefore, a special work of the rational physiologist to discover the higher uses of our varied human faculties. We only see at present the beginning of this great work of applied physiology in enabling us to comprehend the full effects of food, air, exercise, climate, &c., upon human character. We possess only vague knowledge of the great facts of the hereditary transmission of diseased or healthy qualities or tendencies; and we give, as yet, no due consideration to the important results which follow from such transmission. We only faintly realise the transforming power of habit or mind in healthy growth and in morbid degeneration.

These investigations form a distinct branch of applied physiology; and such investigation and application of physiology is the especial duty of the rational or Christian physiologist, who alone sees clearly that creative force is a beneficent power; and this perception cheers and guides him in the perplexed paths which lead towards human growth and perfection.

Medicine and morality being related to function and use are, therefore, inseparable in a Progressive State. The union between the physical, moral, and intellectual elements of our nature cannot be dissolved during lifetime. To speak of the "Physician of Nature" and "Physician of Grace," as two entirely distinct classes, is an untenable position or a misleading sophism. Sound education, State medicine,



healthy society, must all be based upon the inseparable union of the various elements of the human constitution. This is the only rational system of research and its practical application in a Christian land; any other practice leads to empirical medicine and hypocritical morality.

This unity of human nature gives immense importance to the influences which surround the beginning of life and the education of the young. The greatest present obstacle to progress is the ignorance of parents, and above all of mothers, of many facts of physiology, and particularly of the facts of sexual physiology. For want of this knowledge our nurseries and schools are not wisely guarded, young people lack guidance, and marriages are too often the mischievous union of two unsuitable partners.

By the present lamentable ignorance of sound physiology, men and women lack the elements necessary for forming correct judgment on the most important relations of life. Parents are thus unequal to their first duty, viz. the guiding of domestic and social life as helpmeets to one another.

In all the excellent treatises on physiology, domestic economy, and education, prepared for the special instruction and help of parents and teachers, all knowledge is generally omitted which refers to the sexual functions; yet to the parent or educator this is an essential branch of knowledge. A woman attempts to carry on her work blindfold, who tries to educate her children, guide her household, or take her proper part in society without this knowledge. She under-



stands nothing that is going on around her ; she sees nothing but the surface of things ; her influence is either stupid, mischievous, or negative, if she is not truthfully instructed in relation to the central force of human emotion and action.

Mothers, requiring this knowledge for their special duties which commence with infant life, can with propriety, purity, and reverence study the action and uses of our sexual powers. Their intense interest in the family and self-sacrificing devotion to its welfare, their insight into its needs, and their sensitive consciousness of the approach of danger to their offspring, make them the providentially appointed guardians of the young. The profound depth of the passion of maternity in woman extends not only to the relations of marriage, but to all the weak or suffering wherever found. It gives a sacredness to the woman's appreciation of sex, which has not yet been utilised for the improvement of the social life of the nation.

The ignorance of parents in relation to essential facts is deplorable. I believe it to be the source of our gravest social evils. In the present work, therefore, which I offer to my profession as an aid in the instruction of parents and guardians of the young, I shall speak with the frankness of profound respect in relation to our God-created faculties. As a Christian physiologist, I shall endeavour to show the true and noble use involved in the highest of our human functions.

## CHAPTER I.

*The Distinctive Character of Human Sex.*

A FUNDAMENTAL error as to the nature of human sex too generally exists amongst us, from failure to recognise that in the human race the mind tends to rule the body, and that sex in the human being is even more a mental passion than a physical instinct. This superficial view dims our perception of the causes which produce the facts around us ; it also prevents our recognising the essential difference which exists between human and brute sex, and it blinds us to the imperative necessity of giving human education to this part of our nature.

As the study of the human body is carried on from its simpler to its more complex parts, it is perceived that the physiology of the more complex functions takes in a wider range of relations. The wise guidance of these more complex powers by parent or physician, in health and disease, demands a careful consideration of this extended range of relations. Thus the proper nourishment and exercise of the brain require more extended knowledge than the hygienic treatment of the skin, and diseases of the brain cause more serious danger to the individual. So all



the faculties which belong to the life of relation—viz. the faculties which, like the senses, link us to our fellows—involve a broader range of study than those which appertain solely to those functions of the body which concern only the individual.

The portion of our organisation most difficult of study, but also requiring the widest range of knowledge for its healthy guidance, is the faculty of sex. This faculty has a very complex aspect from its three-fold relation to the race, to men, and to women.

Sex is not essential to individual existence, but it is indispensable to the continuance of the race; and the progressive or retrograde character of the race largely depends upon the wisdom with which this faculty is guided in youth, and the character of the parental relations which are established.

A serious difficulty in understanding how to educate and regulate the relations of sex arises from the fact that it is the relation of two equal but distinct halves of the human race, and exists in the dual form—male and female. Unless the distinctive characteristics and requirements of each of these equal halves are fully understood, the relation between them cannot be satisfactory. The physiological meaning of the differences in organisation between the sexes is at present very imperfectly understood.

The most striking distinction, however, in the manifestation of the sexual faculties exists between man and the brute creation, and is found in the mental or moral aspects which it assumes in man. The general structural resemblance between man and



the lower animals affords no guidance to the education of this human faculty, for the differences between man and the lower animals are radically greater than the resemblance between them.

The most evident form of this mental difference shows itself as a sentiment of self-consciousness, which is not observed in the brute. If an animal is not frightened by human beings it never hesitates in carrying on sexual congress in their presence, and neither before nor after the special act does it exhibit the smallest approach to shame in relation to it. In man, however, from the earliest dawn of the approaching faculty, self-consciousness is intense. This is not only observed in well brought-up boys and girls, who shrink from indecency of word or action, but it is never entirely extinguished in the most corrupt man or woman; and even the poor little waifs of our streets, blighted from earliest infancy, exhibit marked consciousness in their infantile depravity. All the vast difference between the gregariousness of the lower animals and the highest human civilisation indicates the mental difference which moulds the human form of the sexual relations. Permanent parental care of offspring, mutual respect between the sexes, reverence for these faculties as typifying the mighty Creative Power of the universe, are stages of social progress based upon this mental difference in human and brute sex.

It is the mental or moral aspect of our sexual powers which, as society grows, shapes so much of the literature of every civilised country. In the



popular ballads of a people, songs of love are even more abundant than patriotic songs ; and as education spreads amongst the masses, romances and novels form the bulk of popular reading.

The subject of love is always of the most absorbing interest to the younger and more active portion of a people ; sexual passion, in its ennobling or debasing form, exercises irresistible attraction.

Our amusements and our customs are largely moulded by the same powerful attraction, viz. the mental and moral quality of the relations which are formed between the sexes. As civilisation advances, and dense masses of human beings are crowded together in heterogeneous selfish strife, the destructive extremes of luxury and pauperism appear. From this state of society, where misery will do anything for money, and the satiety of luxury seeks fresh stimulus, speculation in this strongest part of our nature—sex—arises. Its creative use disappears, and it becomes a subject of merchandise. Every variety of effort is made to stimulate and debase the mental quality or sentiment of sex, and the strength of human passion furnishes an exhaustless field for corrupt speculation.

It is therefore not the simple physical aspect of the reproductive powers which is remarkable in humanity. The physical instinct is shared with the rest of the animal creation. It is the unique and powerful mental and moral element, the principle that moulds and governs human sex, which produces such striking results in the life of our race.



The mental or emotional element in these powers, both in relation to the action and reaction of mind and body, and the hereditary transmission of qualities will therefore largely engage the attention of the physiologist who truly studies our human nature. The distinctive moral character of human sex renders the exclusive study of physical phenomena in man, as useless and unscientific a method of investigation as would be the study of music on dumb instruments. The distinctively mental character of human sex must therefore always be recognised as a guide in any physiological inquiry into the structure and functions of the physical organs especially appropriated to the use of sex.

The clue to a true knowledge of sexual functions in man and woman is found in this striking peculiarity of the human race, viz. that these functions are largely dominated by mental action, and that sex in the human being does not mean simply the action of the physical organs, but also the conjoined mental principle directing those organs.

Sex, therefore, in the human race alone, resting upon that broad, well-marked mental foundation, is capable of great development towards good or towards evil. As simply material satisfaction soon reaches the limit which bounds matter, so mental or spiritual enjoyment is capable of indefinite growth. It is this mental sentiment peculiar to human sex which is capable of a twofold development. It may grow into a noble sympathy, self-sacrifice, reverence, and joy, which enlarge and intensify the nature



through the gradual expansion of the inborn moral elements of sex. It is also this same intensity of the mental form and power of sex, possessed by mankind alone, which allows of the perversion and extreme degradation of sex which is observable only in the human race. It is the degradation of this mental power when running riot in unchecked licence that converts men and women into selfish and cruel devils—monsters, quite without parallel in the brute creation.

These facts are strikingly illustrated by the anatomical and physiological constitution of the human being. The structure and functions of the generative system in our race are contrived in such a way as to support two great leading principles of existence.

These fundamental principles are—First, the independence, freedom, and perfection of the individual. Second, the preservation of the race. These two objects are secured to a certain extent in all highly organised creatures; but in the human race provision is made for individual freedom in a much more marked and perfect manner in accordance with the superior rank of man in creation.

The brute, both male and female, is at certain times blindly dominated by the physical impulse of sex. This impulse in the lower animal is a simple imperative instinct, unhesitatingly yielded to, with no preparation or afterthought, with no calculation, shame, triumph, or regret. But it is very different with the human race, as it grows from lower to



higher states of society. Thoughts and feelings, social ties and conscience, religious training and the objects of life, all act upon the distinctive mental character of sex; and it is seen that the welfare of a third factor, viz. the child, is inseparably connected with these relations.

Its character is thus changed to a very complex faculty. The young man or woman blindly yielding to this power of sexual attraction, against the remonstrance of a high sense of duty, is torn by remorse, and is consciously self-degraded.

The influence of the moral element is also strikingly shown by an evil peculiar to the human race, viz. suicide or insanity as the result of unhappy love.

The growing power of the mental element over sex in all the higher races of mankind is demonstrated by the ennobling friendships between men and women which increasingly brighten life in our own Anglo-Saxon civilisation. The free and friendly intercourse of self-respecting youth of both sexes satisfies the complex wants of early man and womanhood; there is physical as well as mental refreshment in such honourable and natural human intercourse.

In the young man or woman, just entered into the full possession of all the human faculties, where the special attraction of two tends towards marriage, this moral or mental predominance is still remarkable. The attraction towards the other sex is rich in mental delights. The passing sight of the object beloved, a word, a look, a smile, will make sunshine in the gloomiest day. The consciousness of spiritual attrac-



tion will sustain and guard through long waiting for more complete union.

The physical pleasure which attends the caresses of love is a rich endowment of humanity, granted by a beneficent Creative Power. There is nothing necessarily evil in physical pleasure. Though inferior in rank to mental pleasure, it is a legitimate part of our nature, involving always some degree of mental action. The satisfaction which our senses, sight, hearing, touch, &c., derive from all lovely objects adapted to the special sense, indicates that beneficence latent in the "cosmic process" which enters into the physical manifestation of our present earthly life. The sexual act itself, rightly understood in its compound character, so far from being a necessarily evil thing, is really a divinely created and altogether righteous fulfilment of the conditions of present life. This act, like all human acts, is subjected to the inexorable rule of moral law. Righteous use brings renewed and increasing satisfaction to the two made one in harmonious union. Unrighteous use produces satiety, coldness, repulsion, and misery to the two remaining apart, through the abuse of a divine gift.

At a public table in the Tyrol I once heard an Austrian officer, a most repulsive spectacle, dying of his vices, boast of his ruined life, and declare that he would take the consequences and live it over again had he the power to do so. This is the insanity of lust. But it illustrates the inseparable union of soul and body in human sex.

It is the mental element dominating the physical

impulse in man, for evil, which produces that monstrous creation, cold, selfish, and cruel, which is seen only in the man or woman abusing the creative powers of sex.

It will thus be seen that in the varieties of degradation of our sexual powers, as well as in their use and ennoblement, it is the predominance of the mental or spiritual element in our nature which is the characteristic fact of human sex. The inventions and abuses of lust, as well as the use and guidance of love, alike prove the striking and important distinction which exists between the sexual organisation of man and that of the lower animals.



## CHAPTER II

*Equivalent Functions in the Male and Female*

IN examining the characteristics of sex in Man under its dual aspect, male and female, nature's primary or rudimentary aim in establishing sex must be clearly recognised. This aim is the reproduction of the species.

Pleasure in sexual congress is an incident depending largely on mental constitution. In the varying ranks of the animal creation it may or may not exist in connection with reproduction; for it is not essential to the one all-important dominating fact in nature, viz. parentage.

Reproduction is accomplished in various ways in the widely differing ranks of living creatures. Man, owing to certain general resemblances of physical structure, belongs to the higher class of animals, the Mammalia. In this class the two factors necessary to reproduction, viz. ova and semen or sperm, exist in separate individuals. The ova or seed are secreted by the ovaries, two small bodies placed within the pelvis of the female; whilst the sperm or vitalising fluid is secreted by the testes, two small bodies placed outside the pelvis of the male.

The organs or parts which produce these two

essential secretions, ova and sperm, are strictly analogous in the two sexes. Each part in the female corresponds to a similar part in the male; and at an early period of existence before birth it is impossible to determine whether the sex of the embryo is male or female.

Whilst the male and female organs concerned in the production of sperm and of ova are parallel and in strict correspondence, there is one striking deficiency in the male structure. The organ essential to the development of the human being, the organ into which the stimulated ovum (or human seed) must be brought for growth, is entirely wanting in the male structure. There is no rudimentary part corresponding to the uterus in the male. This deficiency or difference between the sexes produces important physiological results. The special part which the male has to perform physically in the all-important reproductive function of sex finishes with the act of sexual congress, but it continues in the female. If conception has taken place, the results of this act become increasingly important. The life of sex, or all that belongs to the life of the race, as distinguished from the existence of the individual, becomes continuously and for a long time inseparable from the woman's personal existence. Thus all the relations of sex form a more important part of the woman's than of the man's life. Another important fact in sexual construction must be noted, viz. the nervous connections of the sexual organs. All the parts concerned in reproduction are in close communication



with the brain by means of the nervous system, and that enlargement of the spinal cord at the base of the brain, the medulla oblongata. If the nervous connection between the generative organs and the brain be severed, no consciousness of those parts will remain. But whilst the natural nervous connection exists, the influence of the brain upon those organs is continually felt, and information as to their changes is sent to the brain. This nerve connection exists from birth, although the formation of ova and sperm (on which the power of reproduction depends) does not take place until a later date. Keen nervous sensation may, therefore, be perceived at any time after birth, although offspring cannot be produced until the more or less perfect establishment of reproductive power at puberty.

It is of great importance to recognise this fact in the education of children.

The above general statements respecting the division and correspondence of the sexual organs in the male and female, and their connection with the brain through the nervous system, are true of all the Mammalia where, as in man, the reproductive power exists in two separate individuals. When, however, we consider the way in which these functions act in the work of reproduction, an important difference is observed between their action in man and in the lower animals. This difference places man, physically, in a different and superior category from the brute creation.

The physiological arrangement of physical sex in



man corresponds to the demands made by the increasing complexity of the sentiment of mental sex.

As already stated, the two essential features of physical sex are ovulation and sperm-formation. These two important factors in the joint work of reproduction are governed by a different rule in human and in brute life. In man they exist under the rule of continuity and of self-adjustment, *i. e.* these functions are always existent, but at the same time they adapt themselves to the higher needs of the individual. These two laws under which the functions exist, viz. 1st, continuity of action ; 2nd, power of self-adjustment, are distinctive marks of superior human sexual function. Both are necessitated by the growth of reason, *i. e.* by a progressive civilisation.

This will be understood clearly by dwelling more in detail on the way in which these two essential parts of reproduction, viz. sperm-formation and ovulation, are established in the human race. In reproduction the female element or seed—that is the ova which are constantly produced in the female—require to be stimulated by contact with the sperm which is constantly produced by the male, before they can commence the remarkable series of changes and transformations which result in the formation of the embryo, the rudimentary human being.

Sperm (or semen) is a highly vitalised fluid, slowly but constantly secreted or formed by the male. As is the case with all organised living fluids, it is filled



with rapidly moving particles, and its vitality appears to be in direct ratio to the quantity and activity of such movement. Motion seems to be inseparably connected with life, and is distinctive of any highly vitalised fluid. Thus in the important and highly organised fluid, the blood, we observe constant motion and change in the active little bodies with which it is filled.

This quality of great and active vitality appears to be indispensable to the sperm, which in the work of procreation is obliged to traverse long and winding passages, in order to come in contact with the ovum which is advancing to meet it. An intense energy in the special act of procreation is needed to overcome the difficulties which may prevent conception.

It is here necessary to note a common but mischievous fallacy. This necessary energy on the part of the male, in order to overcome anatomical difference of structure in sexual congress, is commonly considered an indication or measurement of the superior force of sexual attraction or passion in the male.

This superficial judgment is not unnatural, as facts which are patent to the senses suggest the first crude thought. The chief structures of the male are external; but they are internal in the female. This difference of structure first suggests to the boy the meaning of actions of the lower animals, whilst the girl may grow up to full womanhood in complete unconsciousness of their signification.

This failure to recognise the equivalent value of



internal with external structure has led to such crude fallacy as a comparison of the penis with such a vestige as the clitoris, whilst failing to recognise that vast amount of erectile tissue, mostly internal, in the female, which is the direct seat of special sexual spasm; such superficial observation also fails to realise that sexual attraction is not limited by any isolated physical act.

The true nature of sperm remained unknown during ages of physiological ignorance. It was regarded as the one essential element in reproduction, planted for growth in the uterus, where it was simply nourished by the female. The moving particles contained in it were regarded as animalculæ, and called spermatozoa. Fanciful theories as to these particles forming the brain and nervous system, &c., of the embryo were entertained. But all these theories have been swept away by modern investigation. It is now proved that when the substances of sperm and ova mingle, a new action is set up, and an entirely new substance created. Life, in the true sense of separate individuality, only begins with the mingling of the male and female elements; the commencement of a new existence then taking place when the living ovum fixes itself in the uterus, and remains there for full growth and final birth. The substance of sperm and the substance of ova possess no sanctity of life apart from their union. They are both produced in lavish abundance, and thrown off from the body in the same way as other unused secretions are thrown off.

At the periods of menstruation unused ova are dis-



charged. In a similar manner unused sperm is thrown off from time to time, in an entirely healthy and beneficent way, by spontaneous natural action.

As ovulation in the female and sperm-formation in the male are equivalent productions, so menstruation in the female and natural sperm-emission in the male, are analogous and beneficial functions.

It is in the arrangement of these two functions in man that the physical sexual superiority of mankind to the brute creation lies. The reason of the two distinctive laws which govern human sex is evident. Thus—

1st. Continuity of action. Procreation in man is not limited to any special season. Men and women can be governed by reason as to the time and circumstances when they select one another, and commence the important work of founding a family. The physical organs are maintained in fit condition for reproduction by these functions of ovulation and spermatation, as servants ready to obey at any time the superior intelligence of the master Will.

2nd. The power of self-adjustment. These two functions, whilst maintaining aptitude for procreation in the activities of ovaries and testes, by occasional spontaneous action secure also the independence of the individual by such natural action. In the exercise of a faculty which requires the concurrence of two intelligent beings endowed with free will and reason, individual independence must be secured. It would strike at the root of human progress, and convert society into slavery, if the life and health of an



adult could not be maintained by the self-guidance and independence of the individual. The natural occasional spontaneous action of the structures concerned in reproduction secures individual independence whilst awaiting the beneficial ordinance of marriage.

Thus in the female the constant formation of ova is subordinated to the needs of individual freedom, and to the power of mental self-government, by the function of menstruation, which only in exhausting excess becomes menorrhœa. In the male the slower secretion of sperm is adapted to the same individual freedom and power of self-control by the natural function of sperm-emission, which only in exhausting excess becomes spermatorrhœa.

As menstruation in the female is the means adopted by our organisation for securing both the permanent integrity of the various essential generative structures, and their relief from any excess of vitality; so sperm-emission is the natural relief and independent outlet of that steady action of the generative organs in the male, which secures through adult life the constant aptitude for reproduction distinctive of the human race. The parallel in the two sexes is exact. Menstruation and sperm-emission are the natural healthy actions of self-balance, established by the economy for preserving the mastership of each individual over her or his own nature. At the same time the integrity of the structure is maintained by the steady action of these two functions of ovulation and spermatation. These natural functions only degenerate into states



of disease, through ignorance of physiological law and faulty hygienic conditions on the one hand, or through impure thoughts and bad habits acting through the nervous system on the other. When these natural functions are either injured or unduly stimulated through the brain and nervous system, then only they become diseased, producing menorrhœa or leucorrhœa in the female, and spermatorrhœa in the male.

It is impossible to overrate the wide importance of this law of self-adjustment, under which human function is carried on. The abuses of sex and the misunderstanding of actual facts, which have led to wide-spread error on this subject, will be dwelt on later. Every parent, however, who has been able to fulfil the true parental relationship to the child will realise the beneficence of this law. The obligatory and premature marriage of daughters, so largely the custom abroad, is one result of error on this subject. A still more dangerous error is the cruel advice frequently given to young men to degrade a woman, and sin against his own higher nature by taking a mistress or resorting to harlots.

I have often been consulted by anxious mothers who have observed or been told by their boys of fourteen or fifteen that an unusual discharge had taken place. It is of vital importance to the parent to know that such action is as natural and healthy in the growing lad as in the growing girl, but that in both it is a time requiring guidance, both moral and physical. Respectful, earnest words of hygienic



counsel, including mind and body, are indispensable at this critical time of youth. Parents, particularly mothers, live too often in fatal ignorance of the conditions of sexual health and disease in their children. My advice is constantly asked in such cases as the following:—A careful mother, who had brought up her son, a strong and healthy young man, to the age of twenty, learned from him of this natural sign of vitality, which both supposed to indicate disease! It was with pain and dismay that she replied to his confidence, “Alas! then, my son, I fear you must consult a doctor.” The joyful light of gratitude and renewed hope with which she learned the truth on this important subject—viz. that the occasional spontaneous action of the organs (not voluntarily forced by corrupt thought and action) is natural and beneficial, will not be easily forgotten. It was like the gleam of transcendent joy which I have seen illuminate the face of a young mother at the shrill cry of her firstborn infant.

The measureless evil caused, not only by their ignorance, but by the false information given to mothers, is illustrated by the inquiry made of a friend of mine—a clergyman, by an intelligent French mother, about to move to Paris with her son. This lady, sensible and even pious, wrote to the clergyman to inquire “if providing a mistress for her son would be very costly in Paris?” She had accepted as a fact what she had been taught—viz. that no young man who could not marry early could remain healthy with resorting to vice.

*out*



From lack of true knowledge of the natural facts of their own physical organisation, young men are often terrified into a resort to quacks, who impose on their ignorance. The young also, of both sexes, may be tempted into bad habits of self-abuse at the outset of this new life, from being unacquainted with the evils and dangers of vicious indulgence.

It is the grave parental duty of both father and mother to be able to direct a child at its first entrance into adult life. At an age varying with climate, race, and temperament, the young man as well as the young woman will experience the healthy discharge, which is a sign that the gradual development of the reproductive organs has attained its final stage. In both, its sudden appearance often produces fright; in both it may appear once, with long intervals of recurrence. In the girl it tends gradually (for important natural reasons) to the establishment of a frequent and regularly returning function. In the young man and in the continent unmarried adult, the natural action of these organs is of far less frequent recurrence; it may be of slow and uncertain return, dependent greatly upon the occupation of the mind and general physical state of the individual. In the natural healthy young man, the occasional return of this function, even with a certain degree of periodicity, is a valuable aid to adult self-government.

It is impossible to reprobate too strongly the false views of physiology held by those who make no distinction between the natural healthy growth of these



functions and their abuse. No Christian physiologist whose observation of facts is enlightened by a knowledge of the possibility of moral growth can commit so fatal an error. It is an insult to the male nature to infer that it is inferior to the female nature, because it does not fully possess the power of individual self-balance. The assertion that one human being is dependent on the degradation of another human being for the maintenance of personal health is contradicted by physiological facts, as well as social experience.

The greater complication and elaboration of sexual structure and function belonging to the female nature is due to the more important share given to woman in the work of parentage. The constant production in the female of living germs (ova), which require only a passing act of stimulation by the male to enter into a state of active and astonishingly rapid growth; the unique change of the small uterus into an enormous and powerful structure, capable of containing a perfect child, and sending it forth by tremendous efforts into the outer world; the changes in all the surrounding organs and tissues necessitated by the accomplishment of such a remarkable work in the short space of nine months; and the subjection of this great physical work to the law of individual freedom and perfection, are facts which show the superior complication and importance of the female sexual organisation. The more elaborate processes of menstruation, as compared with the lesser work of sperm-emission, show the greater complication of



the organs to be kept in good working order in the female than in the male.

So extensive and important are the physical structures that must be kept in readiness for use in the mothers of the race, that their action is more withdrawn from the dominion of the will than is the case with men. In relation to the male, it is well known that the secretion of semen is very much controlled by the mental condition of the individual. Thus many a young man during keen nervous excitement (or during the strain of examinations) becomes alarmed by the appearance of unusual action never before noticed.

It is a fact to be carefully noted, that sufficient healthy action to ensure reproductive aptitude is always maintained in the secreting organs throughout adult life, quite independently of the will. Nature never allows the male, any more than the female, to become impotent through abeyance of function. No such fear need ever disturb the mind. The utmost devotion to intellectual life, to lofty thought, to beneficent action, never injures the procreative power, which always remains intact, capable of its special faculty throughout the virile age. But the active exercise of the intellectual and moral faculties has remarkable power of diminishing the formation of sperm, and limiting the necessity of its natural removal, the demand for such relief becoming rarer under ennobling and healthy influences. As Dr Acton remarks, "sexual distress affects particularly the *semi-continent* ; those who see the better course



and approve of it, but follow the worse ; who, without the recklessness of the hardened or the strength of the pure, endure at once the sufferings of self-denial and the remorse of self-indulgence."

The healthy limitation of sexual secretion in men sets free a vast store of nervous force for employment in intellectual and active practical pursuits. The amount of nervous energy expended by the male in the temporary act of sexual congress is very great, out of all apparent proportion to its physical results, and is an act not to be too often repeated. In the fully matured and strong adult the nature is adapted to such occasional expenditure, but it is a serious evil to the growing or unconsolidated nature. Even in strong adult life there is a great loss of social power through the squandering of adult energy which results from any unnatural stimulus given to the appetite of sex in the male. The barbarous custom of polygamy ; the degrading habit of promiscuous intercourse ; selfish licence in marriage ; and all artificial excitements which give undue stimulus to the passion of sex, divert an immeasurable amount of mental and moral force from the great work of human advancement.

The control possessed so largely by the male over the physical function of sperm-formation is not possessed by the female over the corresponding function of ovulation. In the female, nature apparently cannot venture to subordinate the simple physical functions of sex to the will, to as great an extent as in the male. A more unyielding rule is needed in



these physical activities, because the work to be accomplished for the race by the female is so much more elaborate and long continued. A greater amount of varied action in the complicated organs is necessitated in order to maintain their adult aptitude. The function of ovulation (formation of ova) is not increased or diminished by the will, or by the dwelling of the mind upon sexual objects, at all to the same extent that spermatation (formation of sperm) may be affected by the same mental action. Ovulation, and its natural accompaniment menstruation, is much more of a necessary fixed quantity than spermatation, and its natural accompaniment sperm-emission.\*

It is thus seen that the laws guiding the human sexual functions, as established by Creative Power, are as conducive to health, and as consistent with the freedom and perfection of human growth, in one sex as in the other. Each sex, obeying the Governing Law, is created to help, not destroy the other. The general outline of arrangement is the same in each, viz. power of mental and physical self-balance, strictly guarded potency, and a certain degree of periodicity.

I repeat that parents, and especially mothers, should be acquainted with the truths of physiology. There is in the pure sentiment of maternity a special divine gift of unselfishness and profound devotion to the well-being of husband and children. This God-given power enables a wife and mother to comprehend and apply this knowledge with the impersonality

\* See Appendix from the 'Lancet.'

of wisdom. The awful aberrations of our sexual nature excite a deep pity which inevitably seeks for a remedy. When this special aptitude given to women by the power of maternity is fully realised, the enlarged intelligence of mothers will be welcomed as the brightest harbinger of sexual regeneration.



## CHAPTER III

*On the Abuses of Sex—I. Masturbation*

OF the various forms of abuse which spring from ignorance or corruption in the exercise of the most important of our human faculties, two only will be dwelt on, viz. masturbation and fornication. These are the two radical vices from which all forms of unnatural vice spring. The first is the especial temptation of the child; the last, the temptation or corruption of the adult. It will be seen how the one prepares for the other, and how both unchecked and unguided into rightful channels by judicious sexual education lead inevitably to those horrors of unnatural vice which belong to disease, not nature. Abnormal vice abounds on the Continent, where the virtue of Christianity has fallen into contempt. But although it is increasing amongst ourselves as we blindly follow in the path of foreign error, yet happily for parental guidance of childhood and youth, the darkest phases of human corruption need not be exhibited here.

Of Self-abuse (called also Masturbation, Onanism, &c.) it is necessary to speak fully. This vice may infect the nursery as well as the school; and in innumerable cases it induces precocity of physical



sensation, and prepares the way for every variety of sexual evil.

That much contradiction of thought exists on this subject even in the medical profession, the following facts will show. One of the most distinguished members of the profession, a man noted for sound judgment and large experience, made the following noteworthy statement to me in speaking of "The Moral Education of the Young in Relation to Sex." He said, "You are all wrong in what you say about masturbation. Medically speaking, it is of no consequence whatever. Mind I say *medically*, not morally speaking. I know a man the father of a family who was taught by his nurse to masturbate at three years old, and it has done him no harm whatever."

On the other hand, distinguished physicians, as Tissot and others, have drawn frightful pictures of the mental and physical ruin which always result from habits of self-abuse; and they refer to the records of insane asylums to confirm these statements.

There is error and confusion of thought in both these extreme views.

Self-abuse or Solitary Vice is the voluntary purposed excitement of the genital organs, produced by pressure or friction of those parts, or by the indulgence of licentious thoughts.

The term masturbation does not apply to that involuntary and beneficent action of the organs, in the adult of both sexes, with which nature from time to time relieves necessary secretion.



This radical distinction between the independent and benign action of nature, and the dangerous practice of voluntarily stimulated physical sensation, has not been pointed out by physiological investigators with necessary clearness ; nor has the extreme importance of this distinction in the guidance of practical life been dwelt on as a distinction vital to the growth of a Christian nation.

The dangerous habit of voluntarily produced excitement, to which alone the term masturbation is due, may be formed by both the male and the female, and it is found even in the child as well as the adult.

In the child, however (it being immature in body), it is the dependencies of the brain, the nervous system, which come more exclusively into play in this evil habit. The production of ova or sperm, which mark the adult age, has not taken place ; in the child there are none of those periodic or occasional congestions of the organs which mark the growth or effects of reproductive substance in the adult. In the little ignorant child this habit springs from a nervous sensation yielded to because, as it says, "it feels nice." The portion of the brain which takes cognizance of these sensations has been excited, and the child, in innocent absence of impure thought, yields to the mental suggestion supplied from the physical organs. This mental suggestion may be produced by the irritation of worms, by some local eruption, by the wickedness of the nurse, occasionally by malformation or unnatural development of the parts themselves. There is grave reason also for



believing that transmitted sensuality may blight the innocent offspring.

A serious warning against the unnatural practice of circumcision must here be given. A book of "Advice to Mothers," by a Philadelphia doctor, was lately sent me. This treatise began by informing the mother that her first duty to her infant boy was to cause it to be circumcised! Her fears were worked upon by an elaborate but false statement of the evils which would result to the child were this mutilation not performed. I should have considered this mischievous instruction unworthy of serious consideration, did I not observe that it has lately become common among certain short-sighted but reputable physicians to laud this unnatural practice, and endeavour to introduce it into a Christian nation.

Circumcision is based upon the erroneous principle that boys, *i. e.* one half the human race, are so badly fashioned by Creative Power that they must be reformed by the surgeon; consequently that every male child must be mutilated by removing the natural covering with which nature has protected one of the most sensitive portions of the human body.

The erroneous nature of such a practice is shown by the fact that although this custom (which originated amongst licentious nations in hot climates) has been carried on for many hundred generations, yet nature continues to protect her children by reproducing the valuable protection in man and all the higher animals, regardless of impotent surgical interference.

Appeals to the fears of uninstructed parents on the



grounds of cleanliness or of hardening the part are entirely fallacious and unsupported by evidence.

It is a physiological fact that the natural lubricating secretion of every healthy part is beneficial, not injurious to the part thus protected, and that no attempt to render a sensitive part insensitive is either practicable or justifiable. The protection which nature affords to these parts is an aid to physical purity by affording necessary protection against constant external contact of a part which necessarily remains keenly sensitive; and bad habits in boys and girls cannot be prevented by surgical operations. Where no malformation exists, bad habits can only be forestalled by healthy moral and physical education.

The plea that this unnatural practice will lessen the risk of infection to the sensualist in promiscuous intercourse is not one that our honorable profession will support.

Parents, therefore, should be warned that this ugly mutilation of their children involves serious danger, both to their physical and moral health.

It is a fact which deserves serious consideration, that many ignorant women purposely resort to vicious sexual manipulation to soothe their fractious infants. The superintendent of a large prison for women informed me that this was a common practice, and one most difficult, even impossible entirely to break up.

Medical observation proves that such injury to infancy is not confined to the lower or to the criminal



classes. The habits formed by unrefined or exposed women are brought by servants into our homes. The ignorance or viciousness of nurses, often veiled by a respectable demeanour, has injured and even destroyed the children of many a well-to-do nursery.

That this habit of self-abuse existing in early childhood is a danger capable of undermining the health from its tendency to increase, is a very serious fact. A little girl of six years old was lately brought to me, whose physical and mental strength were both failing from the nervous exhaustion of a habit so inveterate that she fell into convulsions if physically restrained from its exercise. In this case an evil hereditary tendency from both parents was discovered, and malformation existed in the child. Indeed, cases of injury to childhood from self-abuse are so common in the physician's experience, that warning to parents should be given on this subject. The cause should be carefully sought for wherever this vicious practice is discovered, and the trusted family physician consulted if necessary.

Now it is quite true that this habit when observed in children may often, and I believe generally, be broken up. It is the mother who must do this by sympathy and wise oversight. When a child is known in any way to be producing pressure or excitement in these parts, the watchful observation of the mother must be at once aroused. If no physical cause of irritation such as worms or some malformation appears to be present, the dangerous habit may be broken up entirely; but no punishment must ever



be resorted to. The little innocent child, to whom the sentiment of sex is an unknown thing, will confide in its mother if encouraged to do so. If kindly but seriously told that it may make little children ill to do this thing, and the reply being given (as in cases I have known) that "the little feeling comes of itself," the child should be encouraged to come to its mother, and she "will help him drive the feeling away."

This providential guardianship of the portals of life is a special endowment of maternity; and it is the potential motherhood of all experienced women which fits them to understand and to guide the growth and development of the sexual powers of our human nature. The tact of a mother will never suggest evil to her child; but her quick perception of danger will enable her to detect its signs, and avert it.

The frequent practice of self-abuse occurring in little children from the age of two years old, clearly illustrates the fallacy of endeavouring to separate mind and body in educational arrangements or systems of medical treatment. In the very young child those essential elements of reproduction, sperm and ova, which give such mighty stimulus to passion in the adult, are entirely latent. Yet we observe a distinct mental impression possible, leading to unnatural excitement of the genital organs. This mental impression growing with the growth of the child, produces an undue sensitiveness to all surrounding circumstances which tend to excite this cerebral action. Touch, sight, and hearing become avenues to the brain, prematurely opened to this kind



of stimulus. The acts of the lower animals, pictures, indecent talk, which glide over the surface of the mind in a naturally healthy child, excite self-conscious attention when habits of self-abuse have grown up unchecked. The mind is thus rendered impure, and the growing lad or girl develops into a precocious sexual consciousness.

At school a new danger arises to children from corrupt communication of companions, or in the boy from an intense desire to become a man, with a false idea of what manliness means. The brain, precociously stimulated in one direction, receives fresh impulse from evil companionship and evil literature, and even hitherto innocent children of ten and twelve are often drawn into the temptation.

From the age when the organs of reproduction are beginning slowly to unfold themselves for their future work, the temptation to yield to physical sensation or mental impression increases.

The inseparable relation of our moral and physical structure is seen in full force at the age of twelve or fourteen. Confirmed habits of mental impurity may at any age destroy the body from the physical results of such habits. My attention was painfully drawn to the dangers of self-abuse more than forty years ago, by an agonised letter received from an intelligent and pious lady, dying from the effects of this inveterate habit. She had been a teacher in a Sunday school, and the delight of a refined and intelligent circle of friends. But this habit, begun in childhood in ignorance of any moral or physical wrong which might



result to her nature, had become so rooted, that her brain was giving way under the effects of nervous derangement thus produced, whilst her will had lost the power of self-control.

It will thus be seen that there are two grave dangers attending the practice of masturbation.

The first evil is the effect upon the mind, through the brain and nervous system from evil communications or evil literature. The mind is thus prematurely awakened to take in and dwell upon a series of impressions which awaken precocious sexual instinct. This precocity gives an undue and even dominating power to this instinct over the other human faculties. Coming into play before reason is strengthened, or the sense of responsibility awakened, there is no counterpoise or principle of guidance to the rapidly developing powers of procreation. Thus the precocious stimulus of childhood, even if it has not undermined the individual health, becomes a direct preparation for the selfishness of lust in the adult.

The other grave danger incurred by the practice of masturbation is the risk of its becoming an overmastering habit, from the ease with which it can be indulged; also from the insidious and increasing power of the temptation when yielded to, and from its association with the times when the individual is alone, and particularly the quiet hours of the night.

In the adult who yields to solitary vice, nature's marked distinction between the beneficent effect of spontaneous healthy relief and the injurious action of self-induced irritation is destroyed. Individual self-

control, the highest distinctive mark of the human being, is abandoned. In this way the evil habit may become a real obsession leading to destruction of mental and physical health, to insanity, or to suicide.

It will thus be seen that this first abuse of the sexual faculty given to us by our Creator, viz. the practice of masturbation, is a special danger to the very young as well as a temptation of the adult, and that it is an injury to mind as well as body, through the inseparable union of the moral and physical elements of our human constitution.



## CHAPTER IV

*The Abuses of Sex—II. Fornication*

THE second abuse of sex to be dwelt on by the Christian physiologist is the practice of fornication. One broad distinction separates this form of vice from masturbation, viz. that it necessarily affects two persons instead of only one. Its effects upon the mental and physical development of both the male and female must therefore engage the attention of the physiologist. This necessity of considering the effects produced by a joint act upon two separate individualities greatly complicates the inquiry.

It is so much easier for the popular mind to regard any act performed by an individual or by one sex as exclusively affecting one particular individual or sex engaged in its performance, that it is extremely difficult for most persons to fix their minds steadily upon the inseparable double character of this exceptional human act. It requires a certain amount of generalising power to do this; and the power of generalisation which leads to the recognition of abstract truth, and to the perception that a true



principle is of far higher value than any number of phenomena, is an advanced attainment of human beings. Abstract truth commonly seems vague as compared with a material fact.

We are also so accustomed in using all our other senses, sight, hearing, &c., to regard them as individual possessions, that it is difficult to separate the sexual sense from all others. Yet it distinctly belongs to a different class from all our other senses, because its ultimate expression is not a simple individual performance, but is a social act of vital importance to the race. The imperfection of our intelligence, which makes it easier to consider a joint act in its diversity than in its unity, has led to very imperfect observation of physiological facts, and many false deductions from such imperfect observation. Very grave social errors, leading even to the general debasement and ultimate destruction of national life, flow from the hitherto rudimentary condition of our human intelligence in relation to the sexual powers.

Fornication is the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes. It is the yielding to the domination of the simple physical impulse of sex with no perception or acceptance of the mutual responsibility involved in the relation, and with no regard to a fundamental aspect of this relation, viz. the well-being of offspring. Fornication is the attempt to divorce the moral and physical elements of human nature, and to ignore the inseparable results of joint action.

In considering this subject from a medical point of



view, we are at once brought face to face with a conflict eighteen hundred years old. Christianity, springing up when the Roman Empire was perishing through its vices, stamped fornication as the gravest of social crimes. There is nothing more strongly marked in the earlier records of this religion than the stern, even awful condemnation of whoremongers. The sin of sexual impurity is denounced as the essence of hatred and fraud. We observe that wherever the Christian Church becomes hypocritical and cowardly, and fails to reprobate this sin alike in men and women, in high and low, in the State and in the family, or fails to be the leader of the people against organised evil, there the Christian Church begins to fall into contempt, and the *vox populi* condemns it.

The Christian physiologist, pondering the inexorable law of purity as shown by history, is compelled to re-examine the physical and moral facts of the human constitution, on which the rise and fall of races depend. The question distinctly arises, is Christianity a superstition, dying out in the nineteenth century of science and material development; or does it contain within itself a principle whose transforming power has been hitherto unrecognised, but which will now come into play, and lead the nations into renewed and more permanent vigour of life?

One of the first subjects to be investigated by the Christian physiologist is the truth or error of the assertion so widely made, that sexual passion is a



much stronger force in men than in women. Very remarkable results have flowed from the attempts to mould society upon this assertion. A simple Christian might reply, our religion makes no such distinction; male and female are as one under guidance and judgment of the divine law. But the physiologist must go farther, and use the light of principles underlying physical truth in order to understand the meaning of facts which arraign, and would destroy, Christianity.

It is necessary, therefore, to determine what is meant by strength, and what is meant by passion. In one sense a bull is stronger than a man, and many of the inferior animals are superior in muscular force or keenness of special sense to human beings, yet man is more powerful than the animal world which he dominates to his will. Any assertion that the animal is stronger than the human being fails to recognise the very essence of humanity, viz. mental or moral strength.

Again, in one sense, the whirlwind or the earthquake is stronger than the creative action of nature, their rapid devastation strikes the terrified imagination; yet at the very moment of their ravage, reparative and creative force is being exerted all over the world, with immeasurably more power than any sudden outbreak of destruction.

In determining the strength of races and the strength of individuals, the various elements which constitute vital power must be considered. Endurance, longevity, special aptitudes with the propor-



tionate amount of vital force given to their fulfilment,—these are all elements of relative strength.

In any attempt to settle the comparative strength of man and woman, therefore, all these elements must be weighed. Thus the powers of endurance which are demanded by each kind of life must be accurately measured; the care of a sick child must be balanced against the anxiety of business, the ceaseless cares of indoor life against the changes of outdoor life, &c. The impossibility of so weighing the burden which each sex bears in the various trials and difficulties of practical life shows the futility of attempting to measure the amount of vital power possessed by men or by women separately.

Any attempt at a comparison of absolute sexual power between men and women will be found to be equally futile. The varying manifestations of the sexual faculties, as exhibited in their male and female phases, make the relative measurement of this vital force in men and women quite impossible. Considering, however, the enormous practical edifice of law and custom, which has been built up on the very sandy foundation of the supposed stronger character of male sexual passion, it is necessary to examine closely the facts of human nature, and challenge many erroneous conclusions. Any theory which proposes two methods of judgment, or two measures of law, in consequence of a supposed difference of vital power, is emphatically uncertain, and lays itself open to just suspicion of dangerous error.

The equal numbers of men and women, their



equal longevity, and consequently equal power of enduring the wear and tear of life, prove the equal general vital power of the sexes.

In considering further the special sexual manifestations of the two sexes, we observe that the power of reproduction commences at an earlier age in women than in men. The physical life of the sexual faculties at the same early age is more vigorous in the female than in the male ; and all those social interests which centre round sex in the human race are in the young woman stronger ; whilst at the same age the experience and intellectual development which should give dignity and profundity to the noble object of sex—parentage—are not yet attained. The “eagerness for a romance,” and the unconscious impulse towards parentage are developed earlier, and absorb a larger proportion of vital force in the girl than in the boy.

At a later age, when physical sex is fully developed in the young adult, we are still struck by the greater proportion of vital force demanded from or given by women to all that is involved in sexual life. The physical functions of sex weigh more imperiously upon the woman than the man, compel more thought and care, and necessitate more enlightened intelligence in the general arrangements of life. Physical sex is a larger factor in the life of the woman, unmarried or married, than in the life of the man ; and this is the case at every period of the full vigour of life. In order to secure the perfect health and independent freedom which is the birthright of every rational human being, larger wisdom is required for



the maintenance of perfect physical health in the woman than in the man, this function being a more important element in the one than in the other.

If this be true of the physical element of sex, it is equally true of the mental element. No careful observer can fail to remark the larger proportionate amount of thought and feeling, as compared with the total vital force of the individual, which we find given by women to all that concerns the subject of sex. Words spoken, slight courtesies rendered, excite a more permanent interest in women. That which may be the mere passing thought or action of the man, at once forgotten by him, obliterated by a thousand other intellectual or practical interests in his life, often make a quite undue impression upon the woman. Incidents are thought of over and over again, and are supposed to mean much more than they do mean. A romance or a scandal, a tale of true or false love, will always excite interest, where business, politics, science, or philosophy will fall upon deaf ears. All that concerns the mental aspect of sex, the special attraction which draws one sex towards the other, is exhibited in greater proportionate force by women, is more steady and enduring, and occupies a larger amount of their thought and interest.

The frivolity and ephemeral character of the seducer's impulses, as compared with the earnestness of the seduced, illustrates the profounder character of sexual passion in woman.

Wide-spread unhappiness, social disturbance, and degradation continually arise from the vital force of



human sex in woman, unguarded, unguided, and unemployed.

Passion and appetite are not identical. The term passion, it should always be remembered, necessarily implies a mental element. For this reason it is employed exclusively in relation to the powers of the human being, not to those of the brute. Passion rises into a higher rank than instinct or physical impulse, because it involves the soul of man. In sexual passion this mental, moral, or emotional principle is as emphatically sex as any physical instinct, and it grows with the proportional development of the nervous system.

This mental element of human sex exists in major proportion in the vital force of women, and justifies the statement that the compound faculty of sex is as strong in woman as in man. Those who deny sexual feeling to women, or consider it so light a thing as hardly to be taken into account in social arrangements, confound appetite and passion; they quite lose sight of this immense spiritual force of attraction, which is distinctly human sexual power, and which exists in so very large a proportion in the womanly nature. The impulse towards maternity is an inexorable but beneficent law of woman's nature, and it is a law of sex.

The different form which physical sensation necessarily takes in the two sexes, and its intimate connection with and development through the mind (love) in women's nature, serve often to blind even thoughtful and painstaking persons, as to the immense power of sexual attraction felt by women. Such one-sided



views show a misconception of the meaning of human sex in its entirety.

The affectionate husbands of refined women often remark that their wives do not regard the distinctively sexual act with the same intoxicating physical enjoyment that they themselves feel, and they draw the conclusion that the wife possesses no sexual passion. A delicate wife will often confide to her medical adviser (who may be treating her for some special suffering) that at the very time when marriage love seems to unite them most closely, when her husband's welcome kisses and caresses seem to bring them into profound union, comes an act which mentally separates them, and which may be either indifferent or repugnant to her. But it must be understood that it is not the special act necessary for parentage which is the measure of the compound moral and physical power of sexual passion. It is the profound attraction of one nature to the other which marks passion; and delight in kiss and caress—the love-touch—is physical sexual expression as much as the special act of the male.

It is well known that terror or pain in either sex will temporarily destroy all physical pleasure. In married life, injury from childbirth, or brutal or awkward conjugal approaches, may cause unavoidable shrinking from sexual congress, often wrongly attributed to absence of sexual passion. But the severe and compound suffering experienced by many widows who were strongly attached to their lost partners is also well known to the physician; and this is not



simply a mental loss that they feel, but an immense physical deprivation. It is a loss which all the senses suffer, by the physical as well as moral void which death has created.

Although physical sexual pleasure is not attached exclusively, or in woman chiefly, to the act of coition, it is also a well-established fact that in healthy loving women, uninjured by the too frequent lesions which result from childbirth, increasing physical satisfaction attaches to the ultimate physical expression of love. A repose and general well-being results from this natural occasional intercourse, whilst the total deprivation of it produces irritability.

On the other hand, the growth in men of the mental element in sexual passion, from mighty wifely love, often comes like a revelation to the husband. The dying words of a man to the wife who, sending away children, friends, every distraction, had bent the whole force of her passionate nature to holding the beloved object in life—"I never knew before what love meant"—indicates the revelation which the higher element of sexual passion should bring to the lower phase. It is an illustration of the parallelism and natural harmony between the sexes. The prevalent fallacy that sexual passion is the almost exclusive attribute of men, and attached exclusively to the act of coition—a fallacy which exercises so disastrous an effect upon our social arrangements, arises from ignorance of the distinctive character of human sex, viz. its powerful mental element. A tortured girl, done to death by brutal soldiers, may possess a



stronger power of human sexual passion than her destroyers.

The comparison so often drawn between the physical development of the comparatively small class of refined and guarded women, and the men of worldly experience whom they marry, is a false comparison. These women have been taught to regard sexual passion as lust and as sin—a sin which it would be a shame for a pure woman to feel, and which she would die rather than confess. She has not been taught that sexual passion is love, even more than lust, and that its ennobling work in humanity is to educate and transfigure the lower by the higher element. The growth and indications of her own nature she is taught to condemn, instead of to respect them as foreshadowing that mighty impulse towards maternity which will place her nearest to the Creator if reverently accepted.

But if the comparison be made between men and women of loose lives—not women who are allowed and encouraged by money to carry on a trade in vice, but men and women of similar unrestrained and loose life, the unbridled impulse of physical lust is as remarkable in the latter as in the former. The astounding lust and cruelty of women, uncontrolled by spiritual principle, is an historical fact.

The most destructive phase of fornication is promiscuous intercourse. This riotous debauchery introduced the devastating scourge of syphilis into Western Europe in the fourteenth century. Promiscuous intercourse can never be made "safe." The resort of



many men to one woman, with its results, is against nature.

The special structures of the female body—which are endowed with the elasticity necessary for the passage of a child, rich in secreting glands, in folds, in power of absorption—cannot be treated as a plane surface, to be washed out and labelled “safe.” Physical danger will always be connected with unnatural use of the body; neither party engaged in promiscuous intercourse can be pronounced clean.

This is not the place to speak of the moral danger inseparable from a corrupt bargain which debases the highest function, the creative, to the low status of trade competition; but the Christian physician is bound to consider this.

Some medical writers have considered that women are more tyrannically governed than men by the impulses of physical sex. They have dwelt upon the greater proportion of work laid upon women in the reproduction of the race, the prolonged changes and burden of maternity, and the fixed and marked periodical action needed to maintain the aptitude of the physical frame for maternity. They have drawn the conclusion that sex dominates the life of women, and limits them in the power of perfect human growth. This would undoubtedly be the case were sex simply a physical function.

The fact in human nature which explains, guides, and should elevate the sexual nature of woman, and mark the beneficence of Creative Force, is this very mental element which distinguishes human from



brute sex. This element, gradually expanding under religious teaching, and the development of true religious sentiment, becomes the ennobling power of love. Love between the sexes is the highest and mightiest form of human sexual passion.

The mental element in human sex, although as distinctly a part of sexual passion as the physical element, does not necessarily imply good use. The woman who employs the arts of dress to bring the physical peculiarities of sex into prominence, and uses every method of coquetry and flirtation to excite the attention and awaken the physical impulses of men, is abusing her sexual power. The degree in which she employs these arts, measures the extent to which her own nature is dominated by brute sexual instinct, and the unworthiness of the use to which she puts this instinct.

This power of sex in women is strikingly shown in the enormous influence which they exert upon men for evil. It is not the cold beauty of a statue which enthralls and holds so many men in terrible fascination. It is the living active power of sexual life embodied in its separate overpowering female phase. The immeasurable depth of degradation into which those women fall, whose sex is thoroughly debased, who have intensified the physical instincts of the brute by the mental power for evil possessed by the human being, indicates the mighty character of sexual power over the nature of woman for corruption. It is also a measure of what the ennobling power of passion may be.



Happily in all civilised countries there is a natural reserve in relation to sexual matters which indicates the reverence with which this high social power of our human nature should be regarded. It is a sign of something wrong in education, or in the social state, when matters which concern the subject of sex are discussed with the same freedom and boldness as other matters. This subject should neither be a topic of idle gossip, of unreserved publicity, nor of cynical display. This natural and beneficial instinct of reserve, springing from unconscious reverence, renders it difficult for one sex to measure and judge the vital power of the other. The independent thought and large observation of each sex is needed in order to arrive at truth. Unhappily, however, women are often falsely instructed by men, for a licentious husband inevitably depraves the sentiment of his wife, because vicious habits have falsified his nature and blinded his perception of the moral law which dominates sexual growth.

Each sex has its own stern battle to fight in resisting temptation, in walking resolutely towards the higher aim of life. It is equally foolish and misleading to attempt to weigh the vital qualities of the sexes, and measure justice and mercy, law and custom, by the supposed results. It is difficult for the child to comprehend that a pound of feathers can weigh as much as a pound of lead. Much of our thought concerning men and women is as rudimentary as the child's. Vast errors of law and custom have arisen in the slow unfolding of human nature, from failure



to realise the extent of the injury produced by that abuse of sex—fornication. We have not hitherto perceived that, on account of the moral degradation and physical disease which it inevitably produces, lustful trade in the human body is a grave social crime.

In forming a wiser judgment for future guidance, it must be distinctly recognised that the assertion that sexual passion commands more of the vital force of men than of women is a false assertion, based upon a perverted or superficial view of the facts of human nature. Any custom, law, or religious teaching, based upon this superficial and essentially false assertion, must necessarily be swept away with the prevalence of sounder physiological views.

It is a fact that the brain and nervous system are the media of sensation; and that pleasure, physical or mental, in whatever way it may be aroused, must be measured by the keenness of nervous life in both sexes, not by any special act of one sex.

It has also been shown that the secretion of semen does not necessitate a resort to sexual congress, but that there is a distinct and healthy provision for the removal of unneeded secretions in each sex which leaves the individual the power of self-guidance. Physiology condemns fornication by showing the physical arrangements which support the moral law. It places the procreative act, whose distinctive object is parentage, as the instrument of that wise use which binds together the parents of a new generation. There is no justification in the physiological structure

of humanity for the destructive practice of fornication. We thus see by the light of sound physiology, and the advanced thought of the nineteenth century, the profound insight of the founders of Christianity, who denounced in one equal and awful condemnation the whoremonger and the whore.



## CHAPTER V

*The Development of the Idea of Chastity*

THE most fundamental work which rests upon the medical profession is the spread of physiological truth in its practical application to the education of both boys and girls. The sexual instinct, being a primitive elementary instinct, exists alike in men and women. It is the necessary impulse leading to parentage, an impulse which the great Creative Force has laid down as a law of our present human life. But chastity and continence are not primitive instincts in either sex ; they are the higher growth of reason, and of the religious and legal guidance by which, in every age, it has been found indispensable to direct the impulse of sex.

The way in which this instinct may be exercised to the permanent advantage of a progressive community is a gradual discovery of the human race. It is a development or differentiation of the primitive instinct ; but the instinct, and the wise method of educating or of exercising it, are separate facts.

In the savage stage, in semi-barbarous countries,



and in the slums of all great towns, both men and women are grossly unchaste.

It is by the growth and expansion of human nature, under a knowledge of providential law, that the necessity of guiding the exercise of the original instinct is perceived. Thus varying institutions gradually arise out of the varied methods employed to guide the sexual impulse. Different circumstances, different systems of education, law, and religion produce varying results. But all these results spring from a perception that the sexual instinct requires guidance, and cannot, without danger to society, be left in its primitive ignorance.

In the gradual growth of thought, which leads to ever higher forms of society, the physiologist has very important aid to render. It is his part to show how the two great forces of Habit and Heredity are the powerful physiological factors in the growth or degeneracy of the human race. In these two great facts, viz. the ability to form habits, and the power of transmitting the tendencies produced by habits, the mind and body are inseparably blended, and through them a nation becomes chaste or unchaste. Habit can so change the nature as to make what was difficult easy; it can so strengthen the tendencies in directly opposite directions as to both govern, and to a great extent change the action of the physical organisation itself; and the fact of heredity will transmit these changed tendencies to succeeding generations.

It is impossible in the long run to ignore these two



facts which so powerfully govern sexual passion, because nature has established them. Short-sighted views may exist as to the trivial character of the relations prevailing between the sexes. It may be considered of slight importance whether lust or love rule these relations. The slow or remote nature of the evils produced by the violation of nature's laws, and the apparent escape of some offenders from immediate penalty, confuse the short-sight of the irreligious. But nature disregards our short-sightedness, sweeps away our theories and self-indulgence, and inexorably avenges the violation of law by gradual but inevitable degeneration of the race.

The power which habit exercises over human nature depends upon the physiological character of the nervous system itself, through which our will and thought act.

It has been well said by Michel Levy that periodicity is the law of the nervous system. It is a law which both regulates its physiological action and controls the course of its diseases.

Impressions made upon the brain by external objects, or by internal sensations, modify the condition of the brain. This modification is slight at first, but increases by repetition. When an impression is first made upon the brain, it has to overcome the inertia or unaccustomed state of the organisation to receive that kind of impression. But with each repetition this resistance diminishes, and a habit is formed. Owing to the rule of periodicity which governs the nervous system, the brain tends to repeat the change



which it has once experienced, to recall sensations, and solicit a repetition of changes which have been frequently impressed upon it.

Passing impressions may produce little effect in changing the condition of the brain; but when such impressions are often repeated and prolonged, when the attention is fixed upon them, and the will engaged in recalling them, then the nervous system itself undergoes modification; and a new disposition of the organisation itself is acquired from the continuation and frequent repetition of the same impressions.

It is in this way, through a change in the nervous system itself, that habit becomes literally a second nature; and in this way habits most opposite to the natural or rudimentary state are introduced into our human organisation, and "nature is dominated by or absorbed in habit."

The power of habit is seen even in the action of organs withdrawn from the will; as in the powers of adaptation to all kinds of food, to various kinds of atmosphere and climate. It is, however, in that portion of our nature directly connected with and governed by the brain, that the remarkable transforming power of habit is seen, and in the sexual system this enormous power is most signally displayed.

Habits may become so much a part of our nature that they are exercised unconsciously, the impression which first excited the brain being no longer noticed, though still exerting its modifying influence.

But when the attention is constantly aroused, the



brain acts with sustained and increasing energy; the senses are thus strengthened or perfected, and new and higher powers are developed in the individual, which through inheritance may be transmitted to a succeeding generation.

It is in this way that the practice of continence or of incontinence gradually forms a distinctive characteristic of social and national life.

This distinctive faculty possessed by the nervous system of modifying its own sensations, and even acquiring new aptitudes, is the physiological basis of human progress. "It is the foundation of education, of the power of law, of the influence of custom, and the necessary condition of hygienic improvement."

Habits, when formed in accordance with physiological law, do not tend to indifference. By the constant repetition of impressions a new relation is gradually established between the organs or faculties affected, and the cause which produces the effect. As the keenness of first sensations producing transitory pleasure diminishes, habit strengthens the important relation which grows up between faculties and the objects which modify them. It is the superior power of the new relation thus established by habit between the individual and the objects that have modified his nature, that have even caused the Swiss mountaineer to die of home-sickness, or the bereaved partner in a lifelong union to follow the beloved object to the grave.

It will thus be seen how the idea and the practice of chastity have grown up from a physiological basis,



and may be inseparably interwoven with the essential structure of our physical organisation. Chastity is the government of the sexual instinct by the higher reason or wisdom, *i. e.* by our perception of the providential law which governs our human nature. Customs, and the laws concerning marriage and the relations of the sexes which represent them, are checks or guides, imposed upon the blind sexual impulse by the enlightened common sense of mankind. These customs and laws acting slowly but persistently upon society, generation after generation, modify the habits of thought in the adult, and the methods of education in the child. It is thus that the idea of chastity arises, and its practice becomes possible and easy. It springs as a physiological habit from the effects for good and evil which are produced by the modifications of our nervous system through education and custom.

The universal experience of the world has proved that directly human beings join in societies, they are compelled to impose guides upon the exercise of the sexual powers, in the interest of society itself. This check upon the blind unrestrained use of the sexual impulse is a necessity imposed by our physiological structure for the well-being and continuance of the race.

The most important practical results flow from obedience to the physiological law of chastity thus imposed upon our sexual nature. The necessary mutual aid and respect of the sexes, procreative vigour and the production of a fine race, and the extirpation of the



loathsome disease caused by promiscuous intercourse, are all subject to the guidance of chastity.

The tremendous power of creative law, which is quite beyond our reach, demands that the blind instinct of sex be governed and enlightened by this inevitable higher control, and that human law be moulded upon Divine law.

The mighty and transforming physiological power of habit, with its tendencies transmitted by both men and women to their offspring, shows the method by which the law of chastity must gradually extend its sway over the human race. The choice between inevitable degeneracy and sure improvement is left to our relatively free will, but the law which governs results is beyond our reach. Race after race has perished from blind or wilful ignorance, or neglect of the inexorable moral law bound up with our physiological structure.

The importance of the truths now insisted on can be more fully realised in their wide bearings by experienced and religious physicians than by any other class in the community. If they will learn to trust to the sacredness of the maternal instinct, and instruct mothers, as well as fathers, in these vital truths concerning our sexual structures, they will exercise a mighty influence in the elevation of our race.

To the younger members of the profession I wish to offer some farther hints on the direct practical bearing of the foregoing truths. The facts of our human organisation should not only guide the medical advice given in the consultation room, but caution



us respecting the methods to be adopted in dealing with the poor, and suggest the direction in which national sanitary measures should proceed.

The immense power of this passion of sex in the human race must never be ignored in relation to either men or women. The beneficent control which the human mind can exercise over the passion points out that item in the human *materia medica*, which more than any other the physician must strive to secure for the benefit of his patient, viz. force of will. He is bound to declare the sovereign efficacy of this natural specific, and enforce the methods of securing it. All physical and hygienic means must be called upon to develop and support that power of will, and that mental purity, which alone can govern wisely the human sexual nature.

There is another point which cannot be too strongly insisted on. The personal modesty of patients—that elementary virtue in Christian civilisation—must be carefully cherished by the physician, who, more than any other, is acquainted with its influence on the sexual nature. The common resort to sexual examination is an evil grown up in medical practice of comparatively modern date. The use of the speculum should be strictly limited by absolute necessity. Its reckless use amongst the poor is a serious national injury. I know from forty years' medical experience amongst the poor, as well as the rich, that this custom is a real and growing evil. It should be a last resort of medical necessity, and it is so regarded by thoughtful physicians. That it is sometimes necessary



is unhappily true; and when a poor sufferer learns from her trusted adviser that such investigation is quite unavoidable, acceptance of such judgment is the part of wisdom and true modesty. But it is essential that the medical judgment thus rendered should be final—the result of age and special experience. The wise custom of many physicians to decline practice in which a very special training has not given them the positive knowledge of an expert, should be a universal rule. It is a social wrong when the serious character of this branch of medicine is not conscientiously acknowledged. The natural sentiment of personal modesty is seriously injured amongst respectable people by the resort to a succession of incompetent advisers.

A really serious and national evil results from the thoughtless treatment of the poor. In dispensary and hospital, and wherever medical assistance is rendered to the exposed and helpless classes, the first duty of the physician is to respect personal modesty, or to instil it if the habit has been lost. Every physician, man or woman, is bound to cherish with reverence the great conservative principle of society, personal modesty and self-respect. This is a point on which the medical practitioner cannot avoid a moral responsibility. Physicians are the special guardians of health from infancy onward. They possess the means of acquiring the fullest knowledge of the double elements of human nature—the interaction of mind and body. From their culture, their social position, and the authority which they legitimately exercise, the weighty



responsibility of rightly guarding the human faculties rests chiefly upon them. In all those points where the physical health of a nation is inseparably connected with its moral health, they are more responsible than any other class of the community for the moral condition of their country.

All medical advice and all medical measures must, therefore, be guided by the positive fact that human sex differs from brute sex in the possession of a mental element which is capable of elevating and controlling it, and which must never be lost sight of in dealing with human beings.

To the rising members of our noble profession I earnestly present the foregoing facts for their Christian and patriotic consideration, believing that when they fully realise these great truths they will embrace them with the generous enthusiasm of youth. Thus, while guiding their future practice by sound principles in relation to the care of our human organisation, they will enforce these truths by the strongest of all arguments—the true manliness of their own lives.



## CHAPTER VI

*Medical Guidance in Legislation*

ALL thoughtful members of the medical profession will appreciate the power of education exercised by law, particularly on the rising generation. As students of human physiology, knowing the inseparable connection of mind and body, they can more fully understand how the laws of a country mould social customs, and recognise the gradual but widespread deterioration of social morality resulting from unjust laws.

In all legislation which endeavours to protect and improve national health the medical profession is necessarily consulted. The advice of experts is indispensable in framing measures which affect such important subjects as wholesome food supply, the healthy housing of a people, the prevention and spread of epidemic diseases, &c. Indeed, so important is the connection of a sound body with a sound mind, and so linked together are all classes of society, that common sense and rational foresight will more and more recognise that health regulations are a subject of national concern as well as of indivi-



dual instruction, and the advice of the medical profession will be increasingly needed.

It is, however, equally certain that with the advance of intelligence, of education, and of political power amongst all members of a community, the great principle of Justice must become the foundation on which all legislation, which is to prove of permanent benefit to a nation, will rest. Expediency, regardless of justice, may sometimes seem to offer an easy solution of difficult practical problems, but it is a delusive seeming. The temporary adoption of such expedients, when contrary to the inexorable requirements of far-seeing or sympathetic justice, will always degrade, and in the end destroy the society which persists in resting upon expediency instead of principle.

For this reason slavery and polygamy are always found to hinder the progress of any nation that is founded upon them. In our own country the unjust condonation of adultery, by law, in 1857, against the strenuous opposition of far-seeing statesmen, has educated more than one generation in a false and degrading idea of physiology.

In all sanitary legislation, where the authority of the medical profession is recognised by an appeal to any of its members for guidance in respect to practical regulations, the counsel given affects the honour of the whole profession, and it is vital to the authoritative status of the profession that the advice rendered shall be based upon a sound knowledge of the creative laws which govern our complex human



nature. Superficial or one-sided statements, made on so momentous an occasion as an appeal by legislation to medicine, degrade the profession ; and practical measures founded upon unsound knowledge may debase legislation, and intensify the evils they are intended to diminish.

The most serious of all the subjects on which the advice of the medical profession is required concerns the legislative enactments or municipal regulations which affect the relations of the sexes.

The importance of these relations cannot be over-rated. They deal with the very source of society. They may affect the soundness of both body and mind. If legislation fosters immoral customs, which spread disease and death, then such legislation, corrupting a nation's life, is treachery to human nature, and the false counsel that has been given is defiance of divine law.

A great physiological fact, which requires now to be faced, is that promiscuous intercourse cannot be made physically healthy. The reasons for this have already been stated.\* But no practical measures are sound which do not steadily repress this dangerous and debasing practice in men and women.

This great problem of sexual evil has never hitherto been studied from the two sides which nature presents to us. But sound physiology requires that the parallel functions and equal attraction in the two halves of humanity be considered. A Christian nation must recognise that the purchase of the weaker by

\* See Chapter IV.



the stronger is a cruel and debasing trade which must be checked, and that the substitution of promiscuous intercourse for Christian marriage is a physical and moral degradation to each half of the human race.

When the facts are fully grasped—1st, that men are not made dependent upon women for the maintenance of individual health and vigour; 2nd, that women violate a law of nature when they fail to reverence their potential motherhood—the great principle which should guide sex legislation will be established.

In all practical measures required to check sex disorders in our midst, the co-operation of experienced men and women is essential.

Whether it be for the maintenance of good order in the streets, for purification of the slums, for reduction of brothels, for reform of marriage laws, or for the extirpation of venereal disease, no regulations will unite expediency with justice which do not proceed from the united wisdom of earnest men and women.

There are encouraging signs in the present day that such a source of hopeful practical reform will become possible, and that men and women of large experience are rising into that reverential recognition of the Creative Power entrusted to the human race, which will enable them to consult together, and thus gain the wisdom necessary for practical action.

The awful aberrations of our sexual nature, which produce such profound social disorder, and exercise such degrading influence on the relations of men and



women, result from ignorance of physiological laws and the adaptation of human physical structure to the maintenance of those laws.

It is through the recognition of these facts by the medical profession, and their instruction of parents in the truths of physiology, that the most powerful impetus to human growth may now be given. The medical profession can prove, through its knowledge of the physical and mental structure of the human race, that the great Christian doctrine of one equal standard of morality for our race is true doctrine based upon our human constitution.

Our noble profession is summoned to a mighty warfare in the present deadly strife between good and evil. If as Christian physicians, believing in a beneficent Creative Power, and imbued with the spirit of the Master, they recognise the Divine unity manifested through the compound nature of all life, they will become the vanguard of that growing army of truth which seeks to know and obey Divine law.



APPENDIX

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THE following sound advice on sexual physiology, from the 'Lancet,' should be widely known :

" Young men in their conflict with temptation to sexual vice often suffer under the disadvantage of receiving but little help from those to whom they ought to look for it with confidence. Few parents have the knowledge and the wisdom to tell their sons the most important truths about the sexual passion just at the time when it is becoming developed in them, and the latter are therefore left an easy prey to their strange desires, and to those 'lewd fellows of the baser sort' who are always at hand to corrupt innocent youth.

" If it is true that to a very large extent parents are unmindful of one of their gravest responsibilities, it is no less true that the medical profession has often failed in its duty in connection with this subject. Medical writers and medical men generally are too often silent on this matter, and unfortunately, when the silence has been broken, it has not always



been with words of truth and soberness. We are constantly hearing and saying that 'knowledge is power;' yet we find that little effort is made to impart the knowledge which would largely aid in preserving the virtue of the young; and the most pernicious teaching of those who, for the lowest of reasons, propagate error is left unnoticed.

"Knowledge alone will never make a people virtuous, but it is an invaluable aid to those who are striving to control their passions. Seeing on all sides the terrible physical, mental, and social havoc wrought by sexual vice, we feel that the medical profession should do its utmost to stem the evil, and, at any rate, should give utterance to the truth with no uncertain sound. What are the physiological facts that ought to be proclaimed by the medical profession? Mainly these. In the first place, that occasional involuntary emissions of semen during sleep, and often in association with libidinous dreams, are natural occurrences in unmarried continent men, and are neither the cause nor the consequence of disease. The emissions are most frequent between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; they vary in frequency in different men, but are favoured by sedentary occupations and by lewd thoughts. The subjects of these emissions sometimes complain of various sensations of malaise, which they attribute to the depressing influence of these losses; but it is a striking fact that such symptoms are only met with in those who have an exaggerated or erroneous conception of the significance of the discharge, and that they quickly disappear when



their real meaning and causation are understood. To regard such a physiological occurrence as a disease and name it 'spermatorrhœa' is a very serious error.

"The second fact we wish to insist upon is that sexual continence does not beget impotence, and that the all-prevailing cause of impotence is prolonged sexual excess. In support of the opposite conclusion appeal has been made to analogy. It has been pointed out that unused muscles and bones waste, and therefore, it is urged, it must be true that continence will lead to impotence. Such argument is utterly fallacious, as are most arguments from analogy. Facts in abundance prove the contrary. Common as is sexual vice, continence is not unknown among us, and the truth of our statement is not difficult to verify. The real argument from analogy is drawn from the breast. This gland is generally inactive for many years after puberty, and yet, whenever the call for its activity arrives, it is more or less perfectly responded to. As a matter of fact, impotence does not depend upon the testicle, but upon the spinal cord; the sexual act is a physiological nerve-storm, and not simply an act of secretion. Loss of sexual potency is due to some fault in the nerves of the parts, or more commonly in the centre in the spinal cord, which presides over this function. It is often a solitary nervous phenomenon, and by itself is not of grave import.

"The third physiological fact we ought to teach is that no function of the body is so influenced and controlled by the higher nerve-centres as the sexual.



It is excited by lewd imaginings, loose talk, and sensuous scenes. It is set in motion by even accidental stimulus of any part of the nervous system affected by the sexual orgasm. Hence the difficulty of continence. On all sides are sights and sounds that may become the stimulus of sexual excitement. The other side of the picture is equally true. By the exercise of watchfulness and self-control the occasions of such excitement may be reduced to a minimum, and the passion may be subdued.

“Medical men are sometimes asked to formulate rules of diet and exercise—hygienic rules—by which immorality is to be banished. The task is altogether impracticable. Vice is voluntary, and it is only by the exercise of a resolute self-will that virtue is maintained.

“We cannot but believe that were these three very elementary but fundamental physiological truths properly presented and enforced upon young men very much misery would be avoided. Ignorance of them drives men into the clutches of ruthless charlatans, leaves them a prey to groundless fears, and often leads them into vicious habits from which they are unable to free themselves. To withhold such knowledge is in many cases to leave youths in ignorance of the one power by which they can successfully contend against the evil. We feel strongly the urgent importance of this matter, and hence we speak plainly, and hope that others, as they have opportunity, will do their best to help young men in their struggle against vice.”



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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