

A letter to John Hunter : respecting his Treatise on the venereal disease, shewing him to be highly erroneous in his observations on impotence, and more particularly pointing out the absurdity and immorality of his doctrine in favour of onanism or masturbation / By Duncan Gordon.

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A
L E T T E R
T O
J O H N H U N T E R, Esq; F. R. S.

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A
L E T T E R
T O

J O H N H U N T E R, Esq. F. R. S.

SURGEON EXTRAORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY, SURGEON TO ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL, MEMBER OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF PARIS, &c. &c. &c. &c.

R E S P E C T I N G

HIS TREATISE ON THE VENEREAL DISEASE;

Shewing him to be highly erroneous in his Observations on IMPOTENCE, and more particularly pointing out the Absurdity and Immorality of his Doctrine.

I N F A V O U R O F

ONANISM OR MASTURBATION.

By D U N C A N G O R D O N, M. D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. RANDALL, No. 116, SHOE-LANE, the first Door from FLEET-STREET
M,DCC,LXXXVI.



A
L E T T E R

T O

MR. J O H N H U N T E R.

S I R,

I Have perused your Dissertation on the Venereal Disease with great attention, and candour obliges me to acknowledge that, generally speaking, it has infinite merit; but, permit me at the same time to observe, that it also has its defects and imperfections. It may perhaps be thought too bold for one of my age, to presume to differ from a man of your established reputation; a man whom the scientific world look up to with a degree of reverence; and to whom the public are highly indebted. Posterity will have reason to rejoice that the eighteenth century produced a man of your uncommon talents.

But, Sir, I expect too much from you, or any man, if I expect perfection. Those parts of your late production, which I deem the most erroneous, you may probably think inestimable. Milton, you know, preferred his *Paradise Regained*, to his *Paradise Lost*.

B

The

The most exceptionable doctrine in your performance, is that under the head of IMPOTENCE.* Here you display a singularity that must astonish every reader. Every author, ancient and modern, upon this subject, differ from you totally. Treating upon Impotence, you say, "The complaint is by many laid to the charge of Onanism at an early age; but how far this is just, it will in many cases be difficult to determine; for, upon a strict review of this subject, it appears to me by far too rare to originate from a practice so general."

You proceed thus: "How far the attributing to this practice such a consequence, is of public utility, I am doubtful, particularly as it is followed most commonly at an age when consequences are not sufficiently attended to, even in things less gratifying to the senses: but this I can say with certainty, that many of those who are affected with the complaints in question are miserable from this idea; and it is some consolation for them to know that it is possible it may arise from other causes. I am clear in my own mind that the books on this subject have done more harm than good. I think I may affirm that this act in itself does less harm to the constitution in general than the natural. That the natural with common women, or such as we are indifferent about, does less harm to the constitution, than where it is not so selfish, and where the affections for the woman are also concerned. Where it is only a constitutional act, it is simple, and only one action takes place; but, where the mind becomes interested, it is worked up to a degree of enthusiasm, increasing the sensibility of the body and disposition for acting; and, when the complete action takes place, it is with proportional violence; and in proportion to the violence, is the degree of debility produced, or injury done to the constitution."

After having thus ingeniously endeavoured to support this hypothesis, you make the following observations. "In the cases of this kind that have come

* page 200.

“under my care, although the persons themselves have been very ready to suppose that the disease arose from the cause here alluded to; yet they did not appear to have given more into the practice than common; and, in particular, the worst case I have ever seen, was where but very little of this practice had ever been used, much less than in common among boys or lads. The *only true objection to this selfish enjoyment*, is the probability of its being repeated too frequently.”

How different is this doctrine from any that has been advanced! How pernicious and immoral its tendency! No other motive than that powerful one, the utility which this epistle might be to mankind, could have prevailed upon me to commence your correspondent. The crimes of one's fellow creatures afford indeed but a melancholy reflection; the consideration of them not only affects, but humiliates human nature; the idea of diminishing, in some measure, their frequency, and softening the miseries that flow from them, is however a kind of recompence.

My principal design, in addressing you, is to treat upon the *disorders* occasioned by masturbation, or self-pollution, and not upon the *crime* of masturbation: besides, is not the crime sufficiently proved, when it is demonstrated to be an act of suicide? Those who are acquainted with men, know very well that it is much easier to make them shun vice by the dread of a present ill, than by reasons founded upon principles, the truth of which has not been sufficiently inculcated into them.

In framing this letter to you, I hope to stop the progress of a corruption more baneful perhaps than the Small-pox; and the more to be dreaded, as by its working in the shades of mystery, it secretly undermines, without even those who are its victims thinking of its malignity. Let the eyes of youth be opened, and let them learn the *danger*, as well as the *evil*; this would be the surest means of preventing that decay which is complained of in human

man nature, and perhaps of restoring to her, in a few generations, the strength and power of our ancestors.

I need not inform you Sir, that our bodies suffer a continual waste, and if we could not repair this waste, we should soon sink into a state of mortal weakness. This reparation is performed by aliments ; but these aliments must undergo different preparations, which are comprehended under the word nutrition. When once this is either not produced, or but badly, all these aliments become useless, and such disorders must inevitably ensue, as are the general attendants of extreme debility. Of all the causes which prevent nutrition, there are none perhaps, more frequent than too copious evacuations. Such is the frame of our machine, and of animal machines in general, that for these aliments to acquire this degree of preparation necessary for the reparation of the body, it is requisite that a certain quantity of humours, ready prepared, should be always at hand. If this condition is wanting, the digestion and concoction of the aliments are imperfect, and the more imperfect in proportion as the deficient humour happens to be of a more elaborate kind, or of greater importance in the animal œconomy.

A robust nurse, who should die by the loss of some pounds of blood, within twenty-four hours could have furnished the same quantity of milk to her child, five or six hundred days successively, without being sensibly out of order, because milk is of all humours the least elaborated : it is moreover a humour in some respect adventitious, whereas blood is an essential humour. There is another, the feminal liquor, which has so great an influence on the corporeal powers, and upon perfect digestion, which repairs them, that physicians of all ages have unanimously been of opinion, that the loss of an ounce of this humour, would weaken more than that of forty ounces of blood. An idea may be formed of its importance, by observing the effects it produces, as soon as it begins to be formed ; the voice, the physiognomy, the features of the face change, the beard grows, and the whole body often takes another appearance ; because the muscles acquire a thickness and firmness, which form a
sen-

sensible difference between the body of an adult person, and that of a youth not yet arrived at the age of puberty. These changes are prevented by destroying the organ which serves to separate the liquor that produces it; and just observations evince that the amputation of the testicles, at the age of virility, has made the beard fall, and the puerile voice return *.

After this, can the power of its operations upon the body be questioned? Or, can any one doubt of the various ills that must necessarily flow from a profuse evacuation of humor that is so pernicious. *Its destination determines the only proper method of its being evacuated.* Certain distempers cause it sometimes to run off: it may be involuntary lost in lascivious dreams. The author of Genesis has given us the history of the crime of Onan, in order doubtless to transmit to us that of his chastisement; and we learn from Galen, that Diogenes polluted himself in committing the same crime.

If the dangerous effects of too abundant a discharge of this humour, depended only upon the quantity, or were the same, when the *quantities were equal*, it would be of little importance, *in a physical sense*, whether this evacuation was occasioned by either of the methods I have mentioned; but the manner is in this respect equal to the substance: I must be allowed the expression; the subject authorizes such licences. *Too great a quantity* of semen being lost in the *natural* course, produces very direful effects; but they are *infinitely more dreadful*, when the same quantity has been dissipated in an *unnatural manner*. The accidents which happen to such as waste themselves in a natural way, are very terrible; those which are occasioned by masturbation, are still *more so*.

Too great a dissipation of the animal spirits, weakens the stomach, destroys the appetite, and, nutrition having no longer place, the motion of the heart is

* Vide Boerhaave Prælect, ad Institut. f. 658, F. 5. p. 444. Edit. Goet.

weakened, all the parts languish, and an epilepsy succeeds*. Indeed we are ignorant whether the animal spirits and the genital liquor are the same thing; but observation teaches us that these two fluids have a very strict analogy, and that the loss of the one, or the other, produces the same ills. Hoffman says, he has seen the most fatal accidents flow from a dissipation of the seed. "After frequent nocturnal pollutions," says he, "not only the powers are lost, the body falls away, and the face turns pale; but, moreover, the memory fails, a cold sensation seizes all the limbs; the sight is clouded, and the voice becomes hoarse†; all the body languishes by degrees; disturbing dreams prevent sleep administering any relief, and such pains ensue, as are felt from the blows of a cudgel."

In a consultation which was held for a young man, who, among other ills which he had drawn upon himself by masturbation, was afflicted with a great weakness of sight. He says, "That he had seen several examples of people, even in an advanced age, that is to say, after the body had attained its full vigour, who had not only brought on a redness, and acute pains in the eyes, but also such a weakness of sight, that they could neither read nor write‡." Permit me to give you an account of the disorder which gave rise to this consultation. A young man, at the age of fifteen, having given way to masturbation, and having frequently practised it till he was three-and-twenty, was, at that period, seized with such a weakness in his head and eyes, that the latter were frequently afflicted with violent spasms at the time of his seminal emissions. When he wanted to read any thing, he was taken with a such a kind of stupor as intoxication creates: the pupil was very much dilated, and he suffered exquisite pains in the eyes: the lids were very heavy, and shut themselves at night; he was constantly shedding tears; and a great quantity of whitish matter ga-

* Schelhammer, *Ars medendi universa*, lib. 11. sect. 2. c. 4.

† Consult. Cent. 2 and 3. case 102. Vol. III. p. 34.

‡ Ibid. case 100.

thered in the two corners, which were very painful. Though he ate with pleasure, he was reduced almost to a skeleton; and, as soon as he had done eating, he was in a kind of intoxication.

Boerhaave delineates these disorders with that strength and precision which are the characteristics of his descriptions. "The loss of too much semen," says he, "occasions lassitude, debilitates, and renders exercise difficult; it causes convulsions, emaciation, and pains in the membrane of the brain; it deadens the senses, and particularly the sight, gives rise to a dorsal consumption, indolence, and various other disorders, which are connected with these."

Dr. Tissot informs us, that, whilst he was studying philosophy at Geneva, one of his fellow students had arrived at such a horrid pitch in the practice of these abominations, that he was incapable of abstaining from them, even at the time of his receiving his lessons: he did not long wait his chastisement: he died miserably of a consumption at the end of two years.

Another cause why masturbators are debilitated is, that, independent even of the emissions, the frequency of erection, though imperfect, with which they are afflicted, greatly weakens them. Every part that is in a state of tension, exhausts the powers, and they have none to lose; the spirits are conveyed thither in greater quantities; they are dissipated, and this occasions weakness: they are wanting in the performance of their functions, which is thereby only imperfectly done: the concurrence of these two causes is attended with the most dangerous consequences. Another accident to which this cause renders masturbators more liable, is a kind of palsy in the organs of generation, whence arises impotency, through a defect of erection, and a simple gonorrhœa, because the relaxed parts suffer the real semen to escape as soon as secreted, together with an afflux of that humour which the prostaticæ separate: and, in a word, all the internal membrane of the urethra acquires a catarrhus disposition, which excites a running similar

to the *fluor albus* in women. This is a disposition not so uncommon as is generally believed, which is not confined to the membrane which covers the nostrils, the breasts, and the lungs, but often attacks the crude viscera; it is mistaken, because it is not suspected, and ill treated, because it is mistaken.

Mr. de Servac, in his essays, described the damages of masturbation, and foretold those victims of this infamous practice, that they would be afflicted with all the infirmities incident to the most languishing old age, in the very flower of their youth.

Mr. Van Swieten, after having given a description of the dorsal consumption, adds, "I have seen all these accidents, and several others, befall those
 " unhappy persons, who had abandoned themselves to shameful pollutions.
 " For three years I used all the aid that medicine could afford without success, for a young man, who had drawn upon himself, by this infamous
 " practice, various pains, as extraordinary as they were general, with alternate sensations of hot and cold, particularly in the loins. Some time after, these pains having in some degree diminished, he felt so much cold in
 " his thighs and legs (though to the touch they seemed to preserve their natural heat) that he was continually warming himself at the fire, even in
 " the heat of summer. My admiration was particularly excited during this period, by the continual rotation of testicles in the scrotum, and the patient
 " felt the same sensation by a similar motion in the loins, which was very
 " troublesome to him*." He does not say whether the unhappy patient ended his life at the end of three years, or whether he continued to languish some time longer, which must have been still more shocking; there is, however, no other alternative.

Hoffman also remarks that young people who give way to the infamous practices of masturbation, are by degrees deprived of the faculties of the soul, particularly their memory, and become quite incapable of study. †

* Aph. 586. t. 11. p. 46.

† Oper. omnia. fol. t. 3. p. 295.

Mr. Lewis, in his practical essay on the *tabes dorsalis*, says, “ all the ills
 “ that are occasioned by excesses with women, more quickly follow in youth
 “ the abominable practice of seminal pollution, and which it would be dif-
 “ ficult to paint in colours so glaring as they merit, a practice to which youth
 “ devote themselves, without being acquainted with the enormity of the
 “ crime, and all its ills, which are its physical consequences. The soul is
 “ sensible of all bodily disorders, but particularly of those which arise from
 “ this cause. The most clouded melancholy indifference for all pleasures,
 “ the impossibility of sharing in the conversation of company, wherein they
 “ are always absent ; the thought of their own unhappiness ; the despair
 “ which arises from considering themselves the architects of their own mi-
 “ sery, and the necessity of renouncing the felicities of marriage, are the fluc-
 “ tuating ideas which compel these miserable objects to sequester themselves
 “ from the world, and happy are those who do not put the finishing hand
 “ to their existence.”

I readily admit, Sir, with you, that excess of venery is highly prejudicial
 to health. Hippocrates, the just and most ancient observer, has described
 the ills that are occasioned by the abuse of amorous pleasures, under the title
Tabes Dorsalis * “ This disorder,” says he, “ arises from the spinal marrow.
 “ Young married people, and those of a lascivious disposition, are afflicted
 “ with it ; they have no fever ; and, though they eat well, they fall away and
 “ become consumptive. They feel as if a sting or stitch descended from the
 “ head along the spinal marrow. Every time they go to stool, or have occa-
 “ sion to urine, they shed a great quantity of thin seminal liquor. They
 “ are incapable of procreation, and they frequently dream of the act of co-
 “ ition. Walking particularly in rugged paths, puts them out of breath, and
 “ weakens them, occasioning a heaviness in the head, and noise in the ears ;
 “ which are succeeded by a violent fever (*typhiria*) that terminates their days.”

Some physicians have attributed to the same cause, a disorder which they

* *De Morbis*, lib. 11, c. 49. *Foes.* p. 479.

have named Hippocrates' second dorsal consumption; this he describes in another place †, and it is in some degree analogous to the first. But the preservation of the powers, which he particularly specifies, appears to me a convincing proof, that this disorder does not depend upon the same cause as the first; it rather seems to be a rheumatic complaint.

Celsus in his excellent book upon the preservation of health, says, "these pleasures are always hurtful to weak people, and the frequent indulgence in them weakens those of stronger constitutions." *De re medica lib. I. c. 9, and 11.*

Galen has observed that the same causes occasion disorders of the brain, and of the nerves, and destroy the powers; and he, in another place, relates that a man who was not cured of a violent disorder, died the same night that he paid the conjugal tribute to his wife.

Pliny, the anatomist, informs us, that Cornelius Gallus, the ancient prætor, and Titus Etherius, the Roman knight, died in the very act of coition. *Historia mundi, lib. VII, c. 53, p. 124.*

"The stomach is disordered," says Aetius, "all the body is weakened; paleness, bodily decay, and emaciation succeed, and the eyes sink into the head."

These testimonies of the most respectable ancients, are confirmed by innumerable modern writers. Sanctorius, who has examined with the greatest attention, all the causes which actuate our bodies, has observed, that this weakens the stomach, destroys digestion, obstructs that insensible perspiration, the irregularity of which produces the most fatal consequences, occasions the liver and reins to be overheated, gives a disposition for the stone in

De Glandulis Foes. 9. 273,

the kidneys, diminishes the natural heat, and usually occasions the loss of, or at least weakens the sight *.

Lommius, in his commentaries upon some passages of Celsus, supports the testimony with his own just observations. “Frequent emissions of the seed,” says he, “relax, dry up, weaken, enervate, and produce a croud of evils; apoplexies, lethargies, epilepsies, faintings, the loss of sight, tremors, palsy, spasms, and every species of the most racking gout.”

Thus have I, Sir, admitted, and even proved that many evils arise from *excess of venery*, even by natural coition; but excesses of all kinds are pernicious. We have naturally an appetite for food, but if that food is taken to excess, many dreadful consequences ensue, and frequently immediate death. Exercise is salutary for the constitution, but a man must not, on that account, run till he is literally *out of breath*.

But, upon a comparative view of the consequences resulting from *excess of venery* and *masturbation*, those occasioned by the latter are infinitely more dreadful; and the reflection that the patient brought on his affliction by his own infamy, must add greatly to his torments, and render existence more intolerable.

I could produce a thousand of the most dreadful pictures, drawn from the first authorities, to shew that your doctrine on masturbation is equally erroneous and immoral: that it is erroneous, common sense, together with the unanimous opinion of all who have written on the subject, except yourself, sufficiently demonstrates: that it is immoral, is equally demonstrable; for it is almost a justification of one of the most unnatural vices that degrade human nature.

You are equally singular, Sir, in advising those who would wish to avoid injuring their health, to pay their devoirs to such of the female sex as are

* *Med. Static, sect. 6. Aph. 15, 19, 21, 23, and 24.*

ugly and otherwise disgusting, as such a connection will produce the discharge which nature requires, without any extraordinary exertion: but, you alledge, that should they engage in the amorous conflict with an amiable object, and one whom they have an affection for, the raptures would be too extatic, and consequently injurious to the constitution. A doctrine similar to this, has been propagated by Dr. Cadogan, in his Treatise on the gout. He says, no one should make use of mustard, pepper, or any other spice, or indeed any other ingredient to give a pleasant relish to his viands, as he would by that means be induced to make too hearty a meal, and consequently injure his health. He even goes a step farther, and insists that if any one regards his constitution, he never will sit down to table to partake of food that he is fond of, but give a preference to that which is coarse, insipid, and even disagreeable to him, that he may not eat immoderately.

But it should be considered, Sir, that, should your doctrine be adopted, the whole human race would shortly be annihilated. If masturbation is to be recommended, procreation may become neglected, and if only the old and ugly among the women are to be the objects of our caresses, a progeny cannot be raised from such an intercourse, as fruition cannot be expected, where the act has been *puposely* performed with *indifference* for the preservation of our health.

Fine women, rich viands, and delicious fruits, henceforth, adieu!—give us old hags, horse-flesh, and crab-apples, to regale upon!—But, Sir, to be serious; if I could even subscribe to your doctrine, in a physical sense, I should detest myself should I cover life upon those infamous conditions.

We may discover, in observing the effect of the passions, the difference between those who addict themselves to women and masturbators; a difference that is totally to the disadvantage of the latter. That joy which the heart

heart is sensible of, and which should be nicely distinguished from that voluptuousness solely corporeal, which man enjoys in common with animals, and from which it is compleatly distinct: this joy aids digestion, animates circulation; accelerates all the functions, restores health and supports it. If this is found united with the pleasures of love, it contributes to repair, and even to restore what they stole by force; and observation proves it. Sanctorius has remarked it; his words are these “ After excessive coition with a woman that is beloved, a man is not sensible of the lassitude which should follow this excess, because the joy which the soul feels, encreases the strength of the heart, favours the functions, and repairs what was lost.”

Upon this principle, Venette maintains that, having correspondence with a handsome woman, does not exhaust so much as an ugly woman. “ Beauty,” says he, “ has charms which dilate our hearts, and multiply its spirits. We should believe, with St. Chrysostom, that when we excite ourselves against the laws of nature, the crime is much greater on that side than on the other; and, can it be questioned, that nature allots more joys to those pleasures procured in her proper channels, than in those which are repugnant to her?”

Another cause of the increase of dangers, flowing from masturbation, is the shocking remorse with which it must be followed, when illness has opened the criminal's eyes to his crimes and his dangers.

Miseri quorum gaudia crimen habent,

If any are in this situation, they certainly are masturbators. When the mask is dropped, and the real picture of their conduct appears in its most hideous colours, they find themselves guilty of a crime, the punishment of which, with instant death, divine justice did not think proper to defer: a crime esteemed enormous, even among the Pagans themselves,

Hoc nibil esse putas: scelus est, mihi, creda, sed ingens

Quantum vix animus concipis ipse tuo.

MART.

The shame which succeeds is an infinite addition to their misery. To such a degree has dissipation in some places arose, that debauchery with women is looked upon only as a habit ; the most criminal, in this respect, make no mystery of it, and imagine it draws upon them no sort of contempt. Where is the masturbator who dares acknowledge his infamy ? And should not this necessity of hiding the deeds in mystic obscurity, be a conviction of the criminality of these acts ? How many are there who have perished, because they did not dare reveal the cause of their illness ? We are much more inclined, and indeed ought to be, to apologize for him, who, seduced by that inclination which nature has engraved in all our hearts, and which is instrumental in preserving our species, as he is no further culpable, than as he gives too unbounded a scope to his inclinations.

But though I differ from you in some instances, I congratulate the public on the publication of your excellent Treatise : it is a great addition to the stock of science, and will benefit mankind. Even on the article of *Impotence*, (the only exceptionable article) you have displayed great professional ability. The following observations, on page 201 of your performance, are ingenious and interesting :—“ Nothing hurts the mind of a man so much as the
 “ idea of inability to perform well the duty of the sex. If his scrotum hangs
 “ low, it makes him miserable ; he conceives immediately that he is to be
 “ rendered incapable of performing those acts in which he prides himself
 “ most. It is certain that the relaxation or contraction of the scrotum, is
 “ in some degree a kind of sign of the constitution ; but it is of the con-
 “ stitution at large, not of those parts in particular. Nurses are so sensi-
 “ ble of the contraction of that part being a sign of health in the children
 “ under their care, that they take notice of it. The relaxation of it in
 “ them cannot be supposed to arise from inability to perform those acts at
 “ one time more than at another. The face is one of the signs of the con-
 “ stitution, and has as much to do with those peculiar acts as the scrotum.
 “ However, we must allow that this part is much more lax than what we
 “ should conceive was intended by nature, even in young men who are
 well

“ well in health ; but as this is very general, I rather suspect that it arises
 “ from the circumstances of the part being kept too warm, and always sus-
 “ pended, the muscles hardly ever being allowed to act, so that they have
 “ less force. How far it is the same in those countries, whose dress does
 “ not immediately suspend those parts, I have not been able to ascertain.
 “ Warmth appears to be one cause, for we find that cold has always an im-
 “ mediate effect ; but this is perhaps owing to its not being accustomed to
 “ cold, which if it were, it might possibly become as regardless of it as it
 “ was of warmth. What the difference is in this part, in a cold and warm
 “ climate, all other circumstances the same, I do not know. But, what-
 “ ever may be the cause, if it is really in common more lax than intended
 “ by nature, it is of no consequence as to the powers of generation. The
 “ testicles will secrete whether kept high or low.”

But, Sir, though I address this epistle to you, and flatter myself that
 you will honour me with a perusal of it, I hope also it will get into the
 hands of many others ; and therefore there cannot be any impropriety in
 my quoting the preceding ingenious article from your late production.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

DUNCAN GORDON

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

THOUGH I differ in opinion from you in some few particulars, in other respects I consider your treatise as a wonderful performance: I have therefore quoted the following very ingenious chapter from it, as a specimen; which will convince my readers of your great ability, and make them anxious of purchasing the whole. This will, I hope, atone for the freedom I have taken in combating your peculiarities,

OF IMPOTENCE DEPENDING ON THE MIND.

Extracted from Mr. JOHN HUNTER's TREATISE.

“ AS the parts of generation are not so necessary for the existence or support of the individual, as what relates to food and sleep, but have a reference to something else in which the mind has a principal concern, a complete action in those parts cannot take place without a perfect harmony of body and of mind; that is, there must be both a power of body, and a disposition of mind; for the mind is subject to a thousand caprices which affect the actions of those parts. Copulation is an act of body, the spring of which is in the mind; but it is not volition, and, according to the state of the mind, so is the act performed. To perform this act well, the body must be in health, and the mind should be perfectly confident of the powers of the body; the mind should be in a state entirely disengaged from every thing else; it should have no difficulties, no fears, no apprehensions; not even an anxiety to perform the act well; for even this anxiety is a state of mind different from what should prevail; there should not be even a fear that the mind itself may find a difficulty at the time the act should be performed. Perhaps no function of the machine depends so much upon the state of the mind as this.

“ The will, and reasoning faculty, have nothing to do with this power ;
 “ they are only employed in the act, so far as voluntary parts are made use
 “ of ; and if they ever interfere, which they sometimes do, it often prodces
 “ another state of the mind, which destroys that which is proper for the per-
 “ formance of the act ; it produces a desire, a wish, a hope, which are all
 “ only diffidence and uncertainty, and create in the mind the idea of a possi-
 “ bility of the want of success, which destroys the proper state of mind, or
 “ necessary confidence.

“ There is, perhaps, no act in which a man feels himself more interested,
 “ or is more anxious to perform well ; his pride being engaged in some de-
 “ gree, which if within certain bounds, would produce a degree of perfection
 “ in an act depending upon the will, or an act in voluntary parts ; but when
 “ it produces a state of mind, contrary to that state on which the perfection
 “ of the act depends, a failure must be the consequence.

“ The body is not only rendered incapable of performing this act, by the
 “ mind being under the above influence, but also of the mind being perfectly
 “ confident of its power, but conscious of an impropriety in performing it ;
 “ this, in many cases, producing a state of mind which shall take away all
 “ power. The state of a man’s mind respecting his sister takes away all
 “ power. A conscientious man has been known to lose his powers, on find-
 “ ing the woman he was going to be connected with unexpectedly a virgin.

“ Shedding tears arises entirely from the state of the mind, although not so
 “ much a compound action as the act in question ; for none are so weak in
 “ body that they cannot shed tears ; it is not so much a compound action of
 “ the mind and strength of body, joined, as the other act is ; yet, if we are
 “ afraid of shedding tears, or are desirous of doing it, and that anxiety is kept
 “ up through the whole of an affecting scene, we certainly shall not shed
 “ tears, or at least not so freely as would have happened from our natural
 “ feelings.

“ From the above account of the necessity of having the mind independent,
 “ respecting the act, we must see that it may very often happen that the state
 “ of mind will be such as not to allow the animal to exert its natural powers ;
 “ and every failure increases the evil. We must also see, from this state of the
 “ case, that this act must be often interrupted ; and the true cause of this in-
 “ terruption not being known, it will be laid to the charge of the body or
 “ want of powers. As these cases do not arise from real inability, they are
 “ to be carefully distinguished from such as do ; and perhaps the only way
 “ to distinguish them is, to examine into the state of mind respecting this
 “ act. So trifling often is the circumstance which shall produce this inabi-
 “ lity, depending on the mind, that the very desire to please shall have that
 “ effect, as in making the woman the sole object to be gratified.

“ Cases of this kind, we see every day ; one of which I shall relate as an
 “ illustration of this subject, and also the method of cure.

“ A gentleman told me, that he had lost his powers in this way. After above
 “ an hour's investigation of the case, I made out the following facts ; that
 “ he had, at unnecessary times, strong erections, which showed that he had
 “ naturally this power ; that the erections were accompanied with desire,
 “ which are all the natural powers wanted ; but that there was still a defect
 “ somewhere, which I supposed to be from the mind. I enquired if all
 “ women were alike to him, his answer was, no ; some women he could
 “ have connection with, as well as ever. This brought the defect, what-
 “ ever it was, into a smaller compass ; and it appeared that there was but
 “ one woman that produced this inability, and that it arose from a desire
 “ to perform the act with this woman well ; which desire produced in the
 “ mind a doubt, or fear of the want of success, which was the cause of the
 “ inability of performing the act. As this arose entirely from the state of the
 “ mind, produced by a particular circumstance, the mind was to be applied
 “ to for the cure ; and I told him that he might be cured, if he could
 “ perfectly rely on his own power of self-denial. When I explained what

“ I meant

“ I meant, he told me, that he could depend upon every act of his will, or
 “ resolution : I then told him, if he had a perfect confidence in himself in
 “ that respect, that he was to go to bed to this woman, but first promise
 “ to himself, that he would not have any connection with her for six nights,
 “ let his inclinations and powers be what they would ; which he engaged to
 “ do ; and also to let me know the result. About a fortnight after, he told
 “ me, that this resolution had produced such a total alteration in the state
 “ of his mind, that the power soon took place, for instead of going to bed
 “ with fear of inability, he went with fears that he should be possessed with
 “ too much desires, too much powers, so as to become uneasy to him, which
 “ really happened ; for he would have been happy to have shortened the
 “ time : and when he had once broke the spell, the mind and powers went on
 “ together, his mind never returning to its former state.”

F I N I S.

" I mean, he told me, that he could depend upon every act of his will, or
 " resolution : I then told him, if he had a perfect confidence in himself in
 " that respect, that he was to go to bed to this woman, but first promise
 " to himself, that he would not have any conversation with her for six nights,
 " but his inclination and powers be what they would ; which he engaged to
 " do ; and also to let me know the result. About a fortnight after, he told
 " me, that this resolution had produced such a total alteration in the state
 " of his mind, that the power took its place, instead of going to bed
 " with fear of inability, he went with tears that he should be possessed with
 " too much desire, too much power, so as to become uneasy to him, which
 " really happened ; for he would have been happy to have shrouded the
 " time ; and when he had once broke the shell, the mind and powers went on
 " together, his mind never returning to its former state."

