AUTO-EROTISM: A STUDY OF THE SPONTANEOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SEXUAL IMPULSE.

I.


By "auto-erotism" I mean the phenomena of spontaneous sexual emotion generated in the absence of an external stimulus proceeding, directly or indirectly, from another person. In a wide sense, which cannot be wholly ignored here, auto-erotism may be said to include those transformations of repressed sexual activity which are a factor of some morbid conditions as well as of the normal manifestation of art and poetry, and, indeed, more or less color the whole of life.

Such a definition excludes the normal sexual excitement aroused by the presence of a beloved person of the opposite sex; it also excludes the perverted sexuality associated with an attraction to a person of the same sex; it further excludes the manifold forms of erotic fetichism, in which the normal focus of sexual attraction is displaced, and voluptuous emotions are only aroused by some object—hair, shoes, garments, etc.—which, to the ordinary lover, are of subordinate—though still, indeed, con-
siderable—importance. The auto-erotic field remains extensive; it ranges from occasional voluptuous day-dreams, in which the subject is entirely passive, to the perpetual unashamed efforts at sexual self-manipulation witnessed among the insane. It also includes, though chiefly as curiosities, those cases in which individuals fall in love with themselves. Among auto-erotic phenomena, or on the borderland, we must further include those religious sexual manifestations for an ideal object, of which we may find evidence in the lives of saints and ecstacies. The typical form of auto-crotism is the occurrence of the sexual orgasm during sleep.

I do not know that any apology is needful for the invention of the term "auto-erotism." There is no existing word in current use to indicate the whole range of phenomena I am here concerned with. We are familiar with "masturbation," but that, strictly speaking, only covers a special and arbitrary subdivision of the field, although, it is true, the subdivision with which physicians and alienists have chiefly occupied themselves. "Self-abuse" is somewhat wider, but by no means covers the whole ground, while for various reasons it is an unsatisfactory term. "Onanism" is largely used, especially in France, and some writers even include all forms of homosexual connection under this name; it may be convenient to do so from a physiological point of view,

1 All the above groups of phenomena are dealt with in other volumes of these Studies: the manifestations of normal sexual excitement, in vols. iii, iv, and v; homosexuality, in vol. ii, and erotic fetichism, in vol. v.

2 See Appendix C.

3 Letamendi, of Madrid, has suggested "auto-crastia" to cover what is probably much the same field. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hufeland, in his Makrobiotic, invented the term "geistige Onanie," to express the filling and heating of the imagination with voluptuous images, without unchastity of body; and in 1844, Kaan, in his Psychopathia Sexualis, used, but did not invent, the term "onania psychica." Gustav Jaeger, in his Entdeckung der Seele, proposed "monosexual idiosynracy," to indicate the most animal forms of masturbation taking place without any correlative imaginative element, a condition illustrated by cases given in Moll's Untersuchungen über die Libido Sexualis, Bd. I, pp. 13 et seq. Dr. Laups (a pseudonym for the accomplished psychologist, Dr. Saint-Paul) uses the term autophile, for solitary vice. (Perersion et Perversité Sexuelles, 1896, p. 337.) But all these terms only cover a portion of the field.
but it is a confusing and antiquated mode of procedure, and from the psychological standpoint altogether illegitimate; "onanism" ought never to be used in this connection, if only on the ground that Onan's device was not auto-erotic, but was an early example of withdrawal before emission, or coitus interruptus.

While the name that I have chosen may possibly not be the best, there should be no question as to the importance of grouping all these phenomena together. It seems to me that this field has rarely been viewed in a scientifically sound and morally sane light, simply because it has not been viewed as a whole. We have made it difficult so to view it by directing our attention on the special group of auto-erotic facts—that group included under masturbation—which was most easy to observe and which in an extreme form came plainly under medical observation in insanity and allied conditions, and we have wilfully torn this group of facts away from the larger group to which it naturally belongs. The questions which have been so widely, so diversely, and—it must unfortunately be added—often so mischievously discussed, concerning the nature and evils of masturbation are not seen in their true light and proportions until we realize that masturbation is but a specialized form of a tendency which in some form or in some degree normally affects not only man, but all the higher animals. From a medical point of view it is often convenient to regard masturbation as an isolated fact; but in order to understand it we must bear in mind its relationships. In this study of auto-erotism I shall frequently have occasion to refer to the old entity of "masturbation," because it has been more carefully studied than any other part of the auto-erotic field; but I hope it will always be borne in mind that the psychological significance and even the medical diagnostic value of masturbation cannot be appreciated unless we realize that it is an artificial subdivision of a great group of natural facts.

The study of auto-erotism is far from being an unimportant or merely curious study. Yet psychologists, medical and non-medical, almost without exception, treat its manifestations—when they refer to them at all—in a dogmatic and off-hand manner which is far from scientific. It is not surprising, therefore,
that the most widely divergent opinions are expressed. Nor is it surprising that ignorant and chaotic notions among the general population should lead to results that would be ludicrous if they were not pathetic. To mention one instance known to me: a married lady who is a leader in social-purity movements and an enthusiast for sexual chastity, discovered, through reading some pamphlet against solitary vice, that she had herself been practicing masturbation for years without knowing it. The profound anguish and hopeless despair of this woman in face of what she believed to be the moral ruin of her whole life cannot well be described. It would be easy to give further examples, though scarcely a more striking one, to show the utter confusion into which we are thrown by leaving this matter in the hands of blind leaders of the blind. Moreover, the conditions of modern civilization render auto-erotism a matter of increasing social significance. As our marriage-rate declines, and as illicit sexual relationships continue to be openly discouraged, it is absolutely inevitable that auto-erotic phenomena of one kind or another, not only among women but also among men, should increase among us both in amount and intensity. It becomes, therefore, a matter of some importance, both to the moralist and the physician, to investigate the psychological nature of these phenomena and to decide precisely what their attitude should be toward them.

I do not purpose to enter into a thorough discussion of all the aspects of auto-erotism. That would involve a very extensive study indeed. I wish to consider briefly certain salient points concerning auto-erotic phenomena, especially their prevalence, their nature, and their moral, physical, and other effects. I base my study partly on the facts and opinions which during the last thirty years have been scattered through the periodical and other medical literature of Europe and America, and partly on the experience of individuals, especially of fairly normal individuals.

Among animals in isolation, and sometimes in freedom—though this can less often be observed—it is well known that various forms of spontaneous solitary sexual excitement occur. Horses when leading a lazy life may be observed flapping the
penis until some degree of emission takes place. Welsh ponies, I learn from a man who has had much experience with these animals, habitually produce erections and emissions in their stalls; they do not bring their hind quarters up during this process, and they close their eyes, which does not take place when they have congress with mares. The same informant observed that bulls and goats produce emissions by using their forelegs as a stimulus, bringing up their hind quarters, and mares rub themselves against objects. I am informed by a gentleman who is a recognized authority on goats, that they sometimes take the penis into the mouth and produce actual orgasm, thus practicing auto-fellatio. As regards ferrets, the Rev. H. Northcote states: "I am informed by a gentleman who has had considerable experience of ferrets, that if the bitch, when in heat, cannot obtain a dog she pines and becomes ill. If a smooth pebble is introduced into the hutch, she will masturbate upon it, thus preserving her normal health for one season. But if this artificial substitute is given to her a second season, she will not, as formerly, be content with it."

Stags in the rutting season, when they have no partners, rub themselves against trees to produce ejaculation. Sheep masturbate; as also do camels, pressing themselves down against convenient objects; and elephants compress the penis between the hind legs to obtain emissions. Blumenbach observed a bear act somewhat similarly on seeing other bears coupling, and hyenas, according to Ploss and Bartels, have been seen practicing mutual masturbation by licking each other's genitals. Mammary masturbation, remarks Féré, is found in certain female and even male animals, like the dog and the cat. Apes are much given to masturbation, even in freedom, according to the evidence of good observers; for while no female apes are celibates, many of

1 H. Northcote, Christianity and Sex Problems, p. 231.

2 Rosse observed two elephants procuring erection by entwining their proboscidies, the act being completed by one elephant opening his mouth and allowing the other to tickle the roof of it. (I. Rosse, Virginia Medical Monthly, October, 1892.)

the males are obliged to lead a life of celibacy. Male monkeys use the hand in masturbation, to rub and shake the penis.

In the human species these phenomena are by no means found in civilization alone. To whatever extent masturbation may have been developed by the conditions of European life, which carry to the utmost extreme the concomitant stimulation and repression of the sexual emotions, it is far from being, as Mantegazza has declared it to be, one of the moral characteristics of Europeans. It is found among the people of nearly every race of which we have any intimate knowledge, however natural the conditions under which men and women may live. Thus,

1 Tillier, L’Instinct Sexuel, 1889, p. 270.

2 Moll, Libido Sexualis, Bd. I, p. 76. The same author mentions (ibid., p. 373) that parrots living in solitary confinement masturbate by rubbing the posterior part of the body against some object until ejaculation occurs. Edmund Selous (“Habits of the Pewit,” Zoologist, April, 1902) suggests that the pewit, when rolling on the ground, and exerting pressure on the anal region, is moved by a sexual impulse to satisfy desire; he adds that actual orgasm appears eventually to take place, a spasm of energy passing through the bird.

3 Dr. J. W. Howe (Excessive Venery, Masturbation, and Continence, London and New York, 1883, p. 62) writes of masturbation: “In savage lands it is of rare occurrence. Savages live in a state of Nature. No moral obligations exist which compel them to abstain from a natural gratification of their passions. There is no social law which prevents them from following the dictates of their lower nature. Hence, they have no reason for adopting onanism as an outlet for passions. The moral trammels of civilized society, and ignorance of physiological laws, give origin to the vice.” Every one of these six sentences is incorrect or misleading. They are worth quoting as a statement of the popular view of savage life.

4 I can recall little evidence of its existence among the Australian aborigines, though there is, in the Wiradyuri language, spoken over a large part of New South Wales, a word (whether ancient or not, I do not know) meaning masturbation (Journal of the Anthropological Institute, July-Dec., 1904, p. 303). Dr. W. Roth (Ethnological Studies Among the Northwest-Central Queensland Aborigines, p. 184), who has carefully studied the blacks of his district, remarks that he has no evidence as to the practice of either masturbation or sodomy among them. More recently (1906) Roth has stated that married men in North Queensland and elsewhere masturbate during their wives’ absence. As regards the Maori of New Zealand, Northcote adds, there is a rare word for masturbation (as also at Raratonga), but according to a distinguished Maori scholar there are no allusions to the practice in Maori literature, and it was probably not practised in primitive times. The Maori and the Polynesians of the Cook Islands, Northcote remarks, consider the act unmanly, applying to it a phrase meaning “to make women of themselves.” (Northcote, loc. cit., p. 232.)
among the Nama Hottentots, among the young women at all events, Gustav Fritsch found that masturbation is so common that it is regarded as a custom of the country; no secret is made of it, and in the stories and legends of the race it is treated as one of the most ordinary facts of life. It is so also among the Basutos, and the Kaffirs are addicted to the same habit. The Fuegians have a word for masturbation, and a special word for masturbation by women. When the Spaniards first arrived at Vizcaya, in the Philippines, they found that masturbation was universal, and that it was customary for the women to use an artificial penis and other abnormal methods of sexual gratification. Among the Balinese, according to Jacobs (as quoted by Ploss and Bartels), masturbation is general; in the boudoir of many a Bali beauty, he adds, and certainly in every harem, may be found a wax penis to which many hours of solitude are devoted. Throughout the East, as Eram, speaking from a long medical experience, has declared, masturbation is very prevalent, especially among young girls. In Egypt, according to Sonnini, it is prevalent in harems. In India, a medical correspondent tells me, he once treated the widow of a wealthy Mohammedan, who informed him that she began masturbation at an early age, "just like all other women." The same informant tells me that on the façade of a large temple in Orissa are bas-reliefs, representing both men and women, alone, masturbating, and also women masturbating men. Among the Tamils of Ceylon masturbation is said to be common. In Cochin China, Lorion remarks, it is practiced by both sexes, but especially by the married women. Japanese women have probably carried the mechanical arts of auto-erotism to the highest degree of perfection. They use two hollow balls about the size of a pigeon's egg (sometimes

1 Greenlees, Journal of Mental Science, July, 1895. A gentleman long resident among the Kaffirs of South Natal, told Northeote, however, that he had met with no word for masturbation, and did not believe the practice prevailed there.


one alone is used), which, as described by Joest, Christian, and others, are made of very thin leaf of brass; one is empty, the other (called the little man) contains a small heavy metal ball, or else some quicksilver, and sometimes metal tongues which vibrate when set in movement; so that if the balls are held in the hand side by side there is a continuous movement. The empty one is first introduced into the vagina in contact with the uterus, then the other; the slightest movement of the pelvis or thighs, or even spontaneous movement of the organs, causes the metal ball (or the quicksilver) to roll, and the resulting vibration produces a prolonged voluptuous titillation, a gentle shock as from a weak electric inductive apparatus; the balls are called rin-no-tama, and are held in the vagina by a paper tampon. The women who use these balls delight to swing themselves in a hammock or rocking-chair, the delicate vibration of the balls slowly producing the highest degree of sexual excitement. Joest mentions that this apparatus, though well known by name to ordinary girls, is chiefly used by the more fashionable geishas, as well as by prostitutes. Its use has now spread to China, Annam, and India. Japanese women also, it is said, frequently use an artificial penis of paper or clay, called engi. Among the Atjeh, again, according to Jacobs (as quoted by Ploss), the young of both sexes masturbate and the elder girls use an artificial penis of wax. In China, also, the artificial penis—made of rosin, supple and (like the classical instrument described by Herondas) rose-colored—is publicly sold and widely used by women.

---

1 Christian, article on "Onanisme," Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales; Ploss and Bartels, Das Weib; Moraglia, "Die Onanie beim normalen Weibe," Zeitschrift für Criminal-Anthropologie, 1897; Dartiges, De la Procréation Volontaire des Sexes, p. 32. In the eighteenth century, the rin-no-tama was known in France, sometimes as "pommes d'amour." Thus Bachaumont, in his Journal (under date July 31, 1773), refers to "a very extraordinary instrument of amorous mystery," brought by a traveler from India; he describes this "boule érotique" as the size of a pigeon's egg, covered with soft skin, and gilded. Cf. F. S. Krauss, Geschlechtsleben in Brauch und Sitte der Japaner, Leipzig, 1907.

2 It may be worth mentioning that the Salish Indians of British Columbia have a myth of an old woman having intercourse with young women, by means of a horn worn as a penis (Journal of the Anthropological Institute, July-Dec., 1904, p. 342).
It may be noticed that among non-European races it is among women, and especially among those who are subjected to the excitement of a life professionally devoted to some form of pleasure, that the use of the artificial instruments of auto-erotism is chiefly practiced. The same is markedly true in Europe. The use of an artificial penis in solitary sexual gratification may be traced down from classic times, and doubtless prevailed in the very earliest human civilization, for such an instrument is said to be represented in old Babylonian sculptures, and it is referred to by Ezekiel (Ch. XVI. v. 17). The Lesbian women are said to have used such instruments, made of ivory or gold with silken stuffs and linen. Aristophanes (Lysistrata, v. 109) speaks of the manufacture by the Milesian women of a leather artificial penis, or olisbos. In the British Museum is a vase representing a hetaira holding such instruments, which, as found at Pompeii, may be seen in the museum at Naples. One of the best of Herondas's mimes, "The Private Conversation," presents a dialogue between two ladies concerning a certain olisbos (or ἰβαύ), which one of them vaunts as a dream of delight. Through the Middle Ages (when from time to time the clergy reprobaded the use of such instruments) they continued to be known, and after the fifteenth century the references to them became more precise. Thus Fortini, the Sicenese novelist of the sixteenth century, refers in his Novelle dei Novizi (7th Day, Novella XXXIX) to "the glass object filled with warm water which nuns use to calm the sting of the flesh and to satisfy themselves as well as they can"; he adds that widows and other women anxious to avoid pregnancy availed themselves of it. In Elizabethan England, at the same time, it appears to have been of similar character and Marston in his satires tells how Lucea prefers "a glassy instru-

1 In Burchard's Penitential (cap. 142-3), penalties are assigned to the woman who makes a phallus for use on herself or other women. (Wasserschleben, Bussordnungen der abendländlichen Kirche, p. 658.) The penis succedaneus, the Latin phallus or fascinum, is in France called godemiche; in Italy, passatempo, and also diletto, whence dildo, by which it is most commonly known in England. For men, the corresponding cunnus succedaneus is, in England, called merkin, which meant originally (as defined in old editions of Bailey's Dictionary) "counterfeit hair for women's privy parts."
ment” to “her husband’s lukewarm bed.” In sixteenth century France, also, such instruments were sometimes made of glass, and Brantôme refers to the godemieh; in eighteenth century Germany they were called *Samthanse*, and their use, according to Heinse, as quoted by Dühren, was common among aristocratic women. In England by that time the dildo appears to have become common. Archemholtz states that while in Paris they are only sold secretly, in London a certain Mrs. Philips sold them openly on a large scale in her shop in Leicester Square. John Bee in 1835, stating that the name was originally dil-dol, remarks that their use was formerly commoner than it was in his day. In France, Madame Gourdan, the most notorious brothel-keeper of the eighteenth century, carried on a wholesale trade in *consolateurs*, as they were called, and “at her death numberless letters from abbesses and simple nuns were found among her papers, asking for a ‘consolateur’ to be sent.”¹ The modern French instrument is described by Garnier as of hardened red rubber, exactly imitating the penis and capable of holding warm milk or other fluid for injection at the moment of orgasm; the compressible scrotum is said to have been first added in the eighteenth century.²

In Islam the artificial penis has reached nearly as high a development as in Christendom. Turkish women use it and it is said to be openly sold in Smyrna. In the harems of Zanzibar, according to Baumann, it is of considerable size, carved out of ebony or ivory, and commonly bored through so that warm water may be injected. It is here regarded as an Arab invention.³

Somewhat similar appliances may be traced in all centres of civilization. But throughout they appear to be frequently confined to the world of prostitutes and to those women who live on the fashionable or semi-artistic verge of that world. Ignorance and delicacy combine with a less versatile and perverted concentration on the sexual impulse to prevent any general recourse to such highly specialized methods of solitary gratification.

On the other hand, the use, or rather abuse, of the ordinary objects and implements of daily life in obtaining auto-erotic gratification, among the ordinary population in civilized modern lands, has reached an extraordinary degree of extent and variety we can only feebly estimate by the occasional resulting mischances which come under the surgeon's hands, because only a certain proportion of such instruments are dangerous. Thus the banana seems to be widely used for masturbation by women, and appears to be marked out for the purpose by its size and shape; it is, however, innocuous, and never comes under the surgeon's notice; the same may probably be said of the cucumbers and other vegetables more especially used by country and factory girls in masturbation; a lady living near Vichy told Pouillet that she had often heard (and had herself been able to verify the fact) that the young peasant women commonly used turnips, carrots, and beet-roots. In the eighteenth century Mirabeau, in his Erotika Biblion gave a list of the various objects used in convents (which he describes as "vast theatres" of such practices) to obtain solitary sexual excitement. In more recent years the following are a few of the objects found in the vagina or bladder whence they could only be removed by surgical interference:

1 The mythology of Hawaii, one may note, tells of goddesses who were impregnated by bananas they had placed beneath their garments. B. Stern mentions (Medizin in der Türki, Bd. II, p. 24) that the women of Turkey and Egypt use the banana, as well as the cucumber, etc., for masturbation. In a poem in the Arabian Nights, also ("History of the Young Nour with the Frank"), we read: "O bananas, of soft and smooth skins, which dilate the eyes of young girls . . . you, alone among fruits are endowed with a pitying heart, O consolers of widows and divorced women." In France and England they are not uncommonly used for the same purpose.

2 See, e.g., Winckel. Die Krankheiten der weiblichen Harnröhre und Blase, 1885, p. 211; and "Lehrbuch der Frauenkrankheiten," 1886, p. 210; also, Hyrtl. Handbuch der Topographischen Anatomie, 7th ed., Bd. II, pp. 212-214. Grünfeld (Wiener medizinische Blätter, November 26, 1896), collected 115 cases of foreign body in the bladder—68 in men, 47 in women; but while those found in men were usually the result of a surgical accident, those found in women were mostly introduced by the patients themselves. The patient usually professes profound ignorance as to how the object came there; or she explains that she accidentally sat down upon it, or that she used it to produce freer urination. The earliest surgical case of this kind I happen to have met with, was recorded by Plazza, in Italy, in 1621 (De Partibus Generationis Inservien-
Pencils, sticks of sealing-wax, cotton-reels, hair-pins (and in Italy very commonly the bone-pins used in the hair), bodkins, knitting-needles, crochet-needles, needle-cases, compasses, glass stoppers, candles, corks, tumblers, forks, tooth-picks, tooth-brushes, pomade-pots (in a case recorded by Schroeder with a cockchafer inside, a makeshift substitute for the Japanese rin-no-tama), while in one recent English case a full-sized hen's egg was removed from the vagina of a middle-aged married woman. More than nine-tenths of the foreign bodies found in the female bladder or urethra are due to masturbation. The age of the individuals in whom such objects have been found is usually from 17 to 30, but in a few cases they have been found in girls below 14, infrequently in women between 40 and 50; the large objects, naturally, are found chiefly in the vagina, and in married women.¹

Hair-pins have, above all, been found in the female bladder with special frequency; this point is worth some consideration as an illustration of the enormous frequency of this form of autoerotism. The female urethra is undoubtedly a normal centre of sexual feeling, as Pouillet pointed out many years ago; a woman medical correspondent, also, writes that in some women the maximum of voluptuous sensation is at the vesical sphincter or orifice, though not always so limited. E. H. Smith, indeed, considers that "the urethra is the part in which the orgasm occurs," and remarks that in sexual excitement mucus always flows largely from the urethra.² It should be added that when once introduced the physiological mechanism of the bladder apparently causes the organ to tend to "swallow" the foreign object. Yet for every case in which the hair-pin disappears and

is lost in the bladder, from carelessness or the oblivion of the sexual spasm, there must be a vast number of cases in which the instrument is used without any such unfortunate result. There is thus great significance in the frequency with which cases of hair-pin in the bladder are strewn through the medical literature of all countries.

In 1862, a German surgeon found the accident so common that he invented a special instrument for extracting hair-pins from the female bladder, as, indeed, Italian and French surgeons have also done. In France, Denucé, of Bordeaux, came to the conclusion that hair-pin in the bladder is the commonest result of masturbation as known to the surgeon. In England cases are constantly being recorded. Lawson Tait, stating that most cases of stone in the bladder in women are due to the introduction of a foreign body, very often a hair-pin, adds: "I have removed hair-pins encrusted with phosphates from ten different female bladders, and not one of the owners of these bladders would give any account of the incident."1 Stokes, again, records that during four years he had four cases of hair-pin in the female urethra.2 In New York one physician met with four cases in a short experience.3 In Switzerland Professor Reverdin had a precisely similar experience.4

There is, however, another class of material objects, widely employed for producing physical auto-erotism, which in the

1 L. Tait, Diseases of Women, 1889, vol. i, p. 100.
4 A. Reverdin, "Épingles à Cheveux dans la Vessie, Revue Médicale de la Suisse Romande, January 20, 1888. His cases are fully recorded, and his paper is an able and interesting contribution to this by-way of sexual psychology. The first case was a school-master's wife, aged 22, who confessed in her husband's presence, without embarrassment or hesitation, that the manoeuvre was habitual, learned from a school-companion, and continued after marriage. The second was a single woman of 42, a curé's servant, who attempted to elude confession, but on leaving the doctor's house remarked to the house-maid, "Never go to bed without taking out your hairpins; accidents happen so easily." The third was an English girl of 17 who finally acknowledged that she had lost two hairpins in this way. The fourth was a child of 12, driven by the pain to confess that the practice had become a habit with her.
nature of things never reaches the surgeon. I refer to the effects that, naturally or unnaturally, may be produced by many of the objects and implements of daily life that do not normally come in direct contact with the sexual organs. Children sometimes, even when scarcely more than infants, produce sexual excitement by friction against the corner of a chair or other piece of furniture, and women sometimes do the same.\(^1\) Guttceit, in Russia, knew women who made a large knot in their chemises to rub against, and mentions a woman who would sit on her naked heel and rub it against her. Girls in France, I am informed, are fond of riding on the chevaux-de-bois, or hobby-horses, because of the sexual excitement thus aroused; and that the sexual emotions play a part in the fascination exerted by this form of amusement everywhere is indicated by the ecstatic faces of its devotees.\(^2\) At the temples in some parts of Central India, I am told, swings are hung up in pairs, men and women swinging in these until sexually excited; during the months when the men in these districts have to be away from home the girls put up swings to console themselves for the loss of their husbands.

It is interesting to observe the very wide prevalence of swinging, often of a religious or magic character, and the evident sexual significance underlying it, although this is not always clearly brought out. Groos, discussing the frequency of swinging (Die Spiele der Menschen, p. 114) refers, for instance, to the custom of the Gilbert Islanders for a young man to swing a girl from a coco palm, and then to cling on and swing with her. In ancient Greece, women and grown-up girls were fond of see-saws and swings. The Athenians had, indeed, a swinging festival (Athenæus, Bk. XIV, Ch. X). Songs of a voluptuous character, we gather from Athenæus, were sung by the women at this festival.

---

1 "One of my patients," remarks Dr. R. T. Morris, of New York, (Transactions of the American Association of Obstetricians, for 1892, Philadelphia, vol. v), "who is a devout church-member, had never allowed herself to entertain sexual thoughts referring to men, but she masturbated every morning, when standing before the mirror, by rubbing against a key in the bureau-drawer. A man never excited her passions, but the sight of a key in any bureau-drawer aroused erotic desires."

2 Freud (Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie, p. 118) refers to the sexual pleasure of swinging. Swinging another person may be a source of voluptuous excitement, and one of the 600 forms of sexual pleasure enumerated in De Sade's Les 120 Journées de Sodome is (according to Dühren) to propel a girl vigorously in a swing.
J. G. Frazer (The Golden Bough, vol. ii, note A, “Swinging as a Magical Rite”) discusses the question, and brings forward instances in which men, or, especially, women swing. “The notion seems to be,” he states, “that the ceremony promotes fertility, whether in the vegetable or in the animal kingdom; though why it should be supposed to do so, I confess myself unable to explain” (loc. cit., p. 450). The explanation seems, however, not far to seek, in view of the facts quoted above, and Frazer himself refers to the voluptuous character of the songs sometimes sung.

Even apart from actual swinging of the whole body, a swinging movement may suffice to arouse sexual excitement, and may,—at all events, in women,—constitute an essential part of methods of attaining solitary sexual gratification. Kiernan thus describes the habitual auto-erotic procedure of a young American woman: “The patient knelt before a chair, let her elbows drop on its seat, grasping the arms with a firm grip, then commenced a swinging, writhing motion, seeming to fix her pelvis, and moving her trunk and limbs. The muscles were rigid, the face took on a passionate expression; the features were contorted, the eyes rolled, the teeth were set, and the lips compressed, while the cheeks were purple. The condition bore a striking resemblance to the passionate stage of grand hysteria. The reveling took only a moment to commence, but lasted a long time. Swaying induced a pleasurable sensation, accompanied with a feeling of suction upon the clitoris. Almost immediately after, a sensation of bursting, caused by discharge from the vulvo-vaginal glands, occurs, followed by a rapture prolonged for an indefinite time.” The accompanying sexual imagery is so vivid as almost to become hallucinatory. (J. G. Kiernan, “Sex Transformation and Psychic Impotence,” American Journal of Dermatology, vol. ix, No. 2.)

Somewhat similarly sensations of sexual character are sometimes experienced by boys when climbing up a pole. It is not even necessary that there should be direct external contact with the sexual organs, and Howe states that gymnastic swinging poles around which boys swing while supporting the whole weight on the hands, may suffice to produce sexual excitement.

Several writers have pointed out that riding, especially in women, may produce sexual excitement and orgasm.\(^1\) It is well-

---

\(^1\) The fact that horse exercise may produce pollutions was well recognized by Catholic theologians, and Sanchez states that this fact need not be made a reason for traveling on foot. Rolliincius, in 1667, pointed out that horse-riding, in those unaccustomed to it, may lead
known, also, that both in men and women the vibratory motion of a railway-train frequently produces a certain degree of sexual excitement, especially when sitting forward. Such excitement may remain latent and not become specifically sexual. I am not aware that this quality of railway traveling has ever been fostered as a sexual perversion, but the sewing-machine has attracted considerable attention on account of its influence in exciting auto-erotic manifestations. The early type of sewing-machine, especially, was of very heavy character and involved much up and down movement of the legs; Langdon Down pointed out many years ago that this frequently produced great sexual erethism which led to masturbation. According to one French authority, it is a well-recognized fact that to work a sewing-machine with the body in a certain position produces sexual excitement leading to the orgasm. The occurrence of the orgasm is indicated to the observer by the machine being worked for a few seconds with uncontrollable rapidity. This sound is said to be frequently heard in large French workrooms, and it is part of the duty of the superintendents of the rooms to make the girls sit properly.

"During a visit which I once paid to a manufactory of military clothing," Pouillet writes, "I witnessed the following scene. In the midst of the uniform sound produced by some thirty sewing-machines, I suddenly heard one of the machines working with much more velocity than the others. I looked at the person who was working it, a brunette of 18 or 20. While she was automatically occupied with the trousers she was making on the machine, her face became animated, her mouth opened slightly, her nostrils dilated, her feet moved the pedals with constantly increasing rapidity. Soon I saw a convulsive look in her to nocturnal pollutions. Rohleder (Die Masturbation, pp. 133-134) brings together evidence regarding the influence of horse exercise in producing sexual excitement.

1 A correspondent, to whom the idea was presented for the first time, wrote: "Henceforward I shall know to what I must attribute the bliss—almost the beatitude—I so often have experienced after traveling for four or five hours in a train." Penta mentions the case of a young girl who first experienced sexual desire at the age of twelve, after a railway journey.

2 Langdon Down, British Medical Journal, January 12, 1867.

3 Pouillet, L'Onanisme chez la Femme, Paris, 1880; Fournier, De l'Onanisme, 1885; Rohleder, Die Masturbation, p. 132.
eyes, her eyelids were lowered, her face turned pale and was thrown backward; hands and legs stopped and became extended; a suffocated cry, followed by a long sigh, was lost in the noise of the workroom. The girl remained motionless a few seconds, drew out her handkerchief to wipe away the pearls of sweat from her forehead, and, after casting a timid and ashamed glance at her companions, resumed her work. The forewoman, who acted as my guide, having observed the direction of my gaze, took me up to the girl, who blushed, lowered her face, and murmured some incoherent words before the forewoman had opened her mouth, to advise her to sit fully on the chair, and not on its edge.

"As I was leaving, I heard another machine at another part of the room in accelerated movement. The forewoman smiled at me, and remarked that that was so frequent that it attracted no notice. It was specially observed, she told me, in the case of young work-girls, apprentices, and those who sat on the edge of their seats, thus much facilitating friction of the labia."

In cases where the sewing-machine does not lead to direct self-excitement it has been held, as by Fothergill,¹ to predispose to frequency of involuntary sexual orgasm during sleep, from the irritation set up by the movement of the feet in the sitting posture during the day. The essential movement in working the sewing-machine is the flexion and extension of the ankle, but the muscles of the thighs are used to maintain the feet firmly on the treadle, the thighs are held together, and there is a considerable degree of flexion or extension of the thighs on the trunk; by a special adjustment of the body, and sometimes perhaps merely in the presence of sexual hyperesthesia, it is thus possible to act upon the sexual organs; but this is by no means a necessary result of using the sewing-machine, and inquiry of various women, with well-developed sexual feelings, who are accustomed to work the treadle, has not shown the presence of any tendency in this direction.

Sexual irritation may also be produced by the bicycle in women. Thus, Moll² remarks that he knows many married women, and some unmarried, who experience sexual excitement when cycling; in several cases he has ascertained that the excitement is carried as far as complete orgasm. This result cannot,

¹ *West-Riding Asylum Reports*, 1876, vol. vi.
² *Das Nervöse Weib*, 1898, p. 103.
however, easily happen unless the seat is too high, the peak in contact with the organs, and a rolling movement is adopted; in the absence of marked hyperæsthesia these results are only effected by a bad seat or an improper attitude, the body during cycling resting under proper conditions on the buttocks, and the work being mainly done by the muscles of the thighs and legs which control the ankles, flexion of the thigh on the pelvis being very small. Most medical authorities on cycling are of opinion that when cycling leads to sexual excitement the fault lies more with the woman than with the machine. This conclusion does not appear to me to be absolutely correct. I find on inquiry that with the old-fashioned saddle, with an elevated peak rising toward the pubes, a certain degree of sexual excitement, not usually producing the orgasm (but, as one lady expressed it, making one feel quite ready for it), is fairly common among women. Lydston finds that irritation of the genital organs may unquestionably be produced in both males and females by cycling. The aggravation of haæmorrhoids sometimes produced by cycling indicates also the tendency to local congestion. With the improved flat saddles, however, constructed with more definite adjustment to the anatomical formation of the parts, this general tendency is reduced to a negligible minimum.

Reference may be made at this point to the influence of tight-lacing. This has been recognized by gynæcologists as a factor of sexual excitement and a method of masturbation. Women who have never worn corsets sometimes find that, on first putting them on, sexual feeling is so intensified that it is necessary to abandon their use. The reason of this (as Siebert points out in his Buch für Eltern) seems to be that the corset both favors pelvic congestion and at the same time exerts a pressure on the abdominal muscles which brings them into the state produced during coitus. It is doubtless for the same

1 In the Appendix to volume iii of these Studies, I have recorded the experience of a lady who found sexual gratification in this manner.

2 Dr. J. G. Kiernan, to whom I am indebted for a note on this point, calls my attention also to the case of a homosexual and masochistic man (Medical Record, vol. xix) whose feelings were intensified by tight-lacing.
reason that, as some women have found, more distension of the bladder is possible without corsets than with them.

In a further class of cases no external object whatever is used to procure the sexual orgasm, but the more or less voluntary pressure of the thighs alone is brought to bear upon the sexual regions. It is done either when sitting or standing, the thighs being placed together and firmly crossed, and the pelvis rocked so that the sexual organs are pressed against the inner and posterior parts of the thighs. This is sometimes done by men, and is fairly common among women, especially, according to Martineau, among those who sit much, such as dressmakers and milliners, those who use the sewing-machine, and those who ride. Vedeler remarks that in his experience in Scandinavia, thigh-friction is the commonest form of masturbation in women. The practice is widespread, and a medical correspondent in India tells me of a Brahmin widow who confessed to this form of masturbation. I am told that in London Board Schools, at the present time, thigh-rubbing is not infrequent among the girl scholars; the proportion mentioned in one school was about ten per cent. of the girls over eleven; the thigh-rubbing is done more or less openly and is interpreted by the uninitiated as due merely to a desire to relieve the bladder. It is found in female infants. Thus, Townsend records the case of an infant, 8 months old, who would cross her right thigh over the left, close her eyes and clench her fists; after a minute or two there would be complete relaxation, with sweating and redness of face; this would occur about once a week or oftener; the child was quite healthy, with no abnormal condition of the genital organs. The frequency of

1 Some women are also able to produce the orgasm, when in a state of sexual excitement, by placing a cushion between the knees and pressing the thighs firmly together.

2 *Leçons sur les Déformations Vulvaires*, p. 64. Martineau was informed by a dressmaker that it is very frequent in workrooms and can usually be done without attracting attention. An ironer informed him that while standing at her work, she crossed her legs, slightly bending the trunk forward and supporting herself on the table by the hands; then a few movements of contraction of the adductor muscles of the thigh would suffice to produce the orgasm.

3 C. W. Townsend, "Thigh-friction in Children under one Year," Annual Meeting of the American Pediatric Society, Montreal, 1896. Five cases are recorded by this writer, all in female infants.
thigh-friction among women as a form of masturbation is due to the fact that it is usually acquired innocently and it involves no indecorum. Thus Soutzo reports the case of a girl of 12 who at school, when having to wait her turn at the water-closet, for fear of wetting herself would put her clothes between her legs and press her thighs together, moving them backwards and forwards in the effort to control the bladder; she discovered that a pleasurable sensation was thus produced and acquired the habit of practicing the manoeuvre for its own sake; at the age of 17 she began to vary it in different ways; thus she would hang from a tree with her legs swinging and her chemise pressed between her thighs which she would rub together.\footnote{Soutzo, Archives de Neurologie, February, 1903, p. 167.} Thigh-friction in some of its forms is so comparatively decorous a form of masturbation that it may even be performed in public places; thus, a few years ago, while waiting for a train at a station on the outskirts of a provincial town, I became aware of the presence of a young woman, sitting alone on a seat at a little distance, whom I could observe unnoticed. She was leaning back with legs crossed, swinging the crossed foot vigorously and continuously; this continued without interruption for some ten minutes after I first observed her; then the swinging movement reached a climax; she leant still further back, thus bringing the sexual region still more closely in contact with the edge of the bench and straightened and stiffened her body and legs in what appeared to be a momentary spasm; there could be little doubt as to what had taken place. A few moments later she slowly walked from her solitary seat into the waiting-room and sat down among the other waiting passengers, quite still now and with uncrossed legs, a pale quiet young woman, possibly a farmer’s daughter, serenely unconscious that her manoeuvre had been detected, and very possibly herself ignorant of its true nature.

There are many other forms in which the impulse of autoerotism presents itself. Dancing is often a powerful method of sexual excitement, not only among civilized but among savage peoples, and Zache describes the erotic dances of Swaheli women
as having a masturbatory object.\(^1\) Stimulation of the nates is a potent adjuvant to the production of self-excitement, and self-flagellation with rods, etc., is practiced by some individuals, especially young women.\(^2\) Urtication is another form of this stimulation; Reverdin knew a young woman who obtained sexual gratification by flogging herself with chestnut burrs, and it is stated that in some parts of France (departments of the Ain and Côte d’Or) it is not uncommon for young girls to masturbate by rubbing the leaves of the Linaria cymbalaria (here called "pinton" or "timbarde") on to the sexual parts, thus producing a burning sensation.\(^3\) Stimulation of the mammary, normally an erogenous centre in women, may occasionally serve as a method for obtaining auto-erotic satisfaction, including the orgasm, in both sexes. I have been told of a case in a man, and a medical correspondent in India informs me that he knows a Eurasian woman, addicted to masturbation, who can only obtain the orgasm by rubbing the genitals with one hand while with the other she rubs and finally squeezes her breasts. The tactile stimulation even of regions of the body which are not normally erogenous zones in either sex may sometimes lead on to sexual excitement; Hirschsprung, as well as Freud, believes that this is often the case as regards finger-sucking and toe-sucking in infancy. Even stroking the chin, remarks Debreyne, may produce a pollution.\(^4\) Taylor refers to the case of a young woman of 22, who was liable to attacks of choreic movements of the hands which would terminate in alternately pressing the middle finger on the tip of the nose and the tragus of the ear, when a “far-away, pleased expression” would appear on her face; she thus produced sexual excitement and satisfaction. She had no

\(^{1}\) Zache, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, 1899, p. 72. I have discussed what may be regarded as the normally sexual influence of dancing, in the third volume of these Studies, “The Analysis of the Sexual Impulse.”

\(^{2}\) The case has been recorded of a Russian who had the spontaneous impulse to self-flagellation on the nates with a rod, for the sake of sexual excitement, from the age of 6. (Rivista Mensile di Psichiatria, April, 1900, p. 102.)


\(^{4}\) Debreyne, Mackiologic, p. 177.
idea of wrong-doing and was surprised and ashamed when she realized the nature of her act.¹

Most of the foregoing examples of auto-erotism are commonly included, by no means correctly, under the heading of "masturbation." There are, however, a vast number of people, possessing strong sexual emotions and living a solitary life, who experience, sometimes by instinct and sometimes on moral grounds, a strong repugnance for these manifestations of auto-erotism. As one highly intelligent lady writes: "I have sometimes wondered whether I could produce it (complete sexual excitement) mechanically, but I have a curious unreasonable repugnance to trying the experiment. It would materialize it too much." The same repugnance may be traced in the tendency to avoid, so far as possible, the use of the hands. It is quite common to find this instinctive unreasoning repugnance among women, a healthy repugnance, not founded on any moral ground. In men the same repugnance exists, more often combined with, or replaced by, a very strong moral and aesthetic objection to such practices. But the presence of such a repugnance, however invincible, is very far from carrying us outside the auto-erotic field. The production of the sexual orgasm is not necessarily dependent on any external contact or voluntary mechanical cause.

As an example, though not of specifically auto-erotic manifestations, I may mention the case of a man of 57, a somewhat eccentric preacher, etc., who writes: "My whole nature goes out so to some persons, and they thrill and stir me so that I have an emission while sitting by them with no thought of sex, only the gladness of soul found its way out thus, and a glow of health suffused the whole body. There was no spasmodic conclusion, but a pleasing gentle sensation as the few drops of semen passed." (In reality, no doubt, not semen, but urethral fluid.) This man's condition may certainly be considered somewhat morbid; he is attracted to both men and women, and the sexual impulse seems to be irritable and weak; but a similar state of things exists so often in women, no doubt due to sexual repression, and in individ-

¹ R. W. Taylor, *A Practical Treatise on Sexual Disorders*, 3rd ed., Ch. XXX.
uals who are in a general state of normal and good health, that in these it can scarcely be called morbid. Brooding on sexual images, which the theologians termed delectatio morosa, may lead to spontaneous orgasm in either sex, even in perfectly normal persons. Hammond described as a not uncommon form of "psychic coitus," a condition in which the simple act of imagination alone, in the presence of the desired object, suffices to produce orgasm. In some public conveyance, theatre, or elsewhere, the man sees a desirable woman and by concentrating his attention on her person and imagining all the stages of intimacy he quickly succeeds in producing orgasm.¹ Niceforo refers to an Italian work-girl of 14 who could obtain ejaculation of mucus four times a day, in the workroom in the presence of the other girls, without touching herself or moving her body, by simply thinking of sexual things.²

If the orgasm occurs spontaneously, without the aid of mental impressions, or any manipulations ad hoc, though under such conditions it ceases to be sinful from the theological standpoint, it certainly ceases also to be normal. Sérieux records the case of a somewhat neurasthenic woman of 50, who had been separated from her husband for ten years, and since lived a chaste life; at this age, however, she became subject to violent crises of sexual orgasm, which would come on without any accompaniment of voluptuous thoughts. MacGillicuddy records three cases of spontaneous orgasm in women coming under his notice.³ Such crises are frequently found in both men and women, who, from moral reasons, ignorance, or on other grounds are restrained from attaining the complete sexual orgasm, but whose sexual emotions are, literally, continually dribbling from them. Schrenck-Notzing knows a lady who is spontaneously sexually excited on hearing music or seeing pictures without anything lascivious in them; she knows nothing of sexual relationships. Another lady is sexually excited on seeing beautiful and natural scenes, like the sea; sexual ideas are mixed up in her mind with

¹ Hammond, Sexual Impotence, pp. 70 et seq.
² Niceforo, Il Gergo, p. 98.
these things, and the contemplation of a specially strong and sympathetic man brings the orgasm on in about a minute. Both these ladies "masturbate" in the streets, restaurants, railways, theatres, without anyone perceiving it.1 A Brahmin woman informed a medical correspondent in India that she had distinct though feeble orgasm, with copious outflow of mucus, if she stayed long near a man whose face she liked, and this is not uncommon among European women. Evidently under such conditions there is a state of hyperaesthetic weakness. Here, however, we are passing the frontiers of strictly auto-erotic phenomena.

_Delectatio morosa_, as understood by the theologians, is distinct from desire, and also distinct from the definite intention of effecting the sexual act, although it may lead to those things. It is the voluntary and complacent dallying in imagination with voluptuous thoughts, when no effort is made to repel them. It is, as Aquinas and others point out, constituted by this act of complacent dallying, and has no reference to the duration of the imaginative process. Debreyne, in his _Marchialogie_ (pp. 149-163), deals fully with this question, and quotes the opinions of theologians. I may add that in the early Penitentials, before the elaboration of Catholic theology, the voluntary emission of semen through the influence of evil thoughts, was recognized as a sin, though usually only if it occurred in church. In Egbert’s Penitential of the eighth or ninth century (cap. IX, 12), the penance assigned for this offence in the case of a deacon, is 25 days; in the case of a monk, 30 days; a priest, 40 days; a bishop, 50. (Haddon and Stubbs, _Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents_, vol. iii. p. 426.)

The frequency of spontaneous orgasm in women seems to have been recognized in the seventeenth century. Thus, Schurig (_Syllepsilogia_, p. 4), apparently quoting Riolan, states that some women are so wanton that the sight of a handsome man, or of their lover, or speech with such a one, will cause them to ejaculate their semen.

There is, however, a closely allied, and, indeed, overlapping form of auto-erotism which may be considered here: I mean that associated with revery, or day-dreaming. Although this is a

---

1 Schrenck-Notzing, _Suggestions-therapie_, p. 13. A. Kind (_Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen_, Jahrgang ix, 1908, p. 58) gives the case of a young homosexual woman, a trick cyclist at the music halls, who often, when excited by the sight of her colleague in tights, would experience the orgasm while cycling before the public.
very common and important form of auto-erotism, besides being in a large proportion of cases the early stage of masturbation, it appears to have attracted little attention.\textsuperscript{1} The day-dream has, indeed, been studied in its chief form, in the "continued story," by Mabel Learoyd, of Wellesley College. The continued story is an imagined narrative, more or less peculiar to the individual, by whom it is cherished with fondness, and regarded as an especially sacred mental possession, to be shared only, if at all, with very sympathizing friends. It is commoner among girls and young women than among boys and young men; among 352 persons of both sexes, 47 per cent. among the women and only 14 per cent. among the men, have any continued story. The starting-point is an incident from a book, or, more usually, some actual experience, which the subject develops; the subject is nearly always the hero or the heroine of the story. The growth of the story is favored by solitude, and lying in bed before going to sleep is the time specially sacred to its cultivation.\textsuperscript{2} No distinct reference, perhaps naturally enough, is made by Miss Learoyd to the element of sexual emotion with which these stories are often strongly tinged, and which is frequently their real motive. Though by no means easy to detect, these elaborate

\textsuperscript{1} Janet has, however, used day-dreaming— which he calls "reveries subconscients"— to explain a remarkable case of demon- possession, which he investigated and cured. (\textit{Névroses et Idées fixes}, vol. i, pp. 390 et seq.)

\textsuperscript{2} "Minor Studies from the Psychological Laboratory of Wellesley College," \textit{American Journal of Psychology}, vol. viii, No. 1. G. E. Partridge ("Reverie." \textit{Pedagogical Seminary}, April, 1898) well describes the physical accompaniments of day-dreaming, especially in Normal School girls between sixteen and twenty-two. Pick ("Clinical Studies in Psychological Dreaming," \textit{Journal of Mental Sciences}, July, 1901) records three more or less morbid cases of day-dreaming, usually with an erotic basis, all in apparently hysterical men. An important study of day-dreaming, based on the experiences of nearly 1,500 young people (more than two-thirds girls and women), has been published by Theodore L. Smith ("The Psychology of Day Dreams," \textit{American Journal of Psychology}, October, 1904). Continued stories were found to be rare—only one per cent. Healthy boys, before fifteen, had day-dreams in which sports, athletics, and adventure had a large part; girls put themselves in the place of their favorite heroines in novels. After seventeen, and earlier in the case of girls, day-dreams of love and marriage were found to be frequent. A typical confession is that of a girl of nineteen: "I seldom have time to build castles in Spain, but when I do, I am not different from most Southern girls; i.e., my dreams are usually about a pretty fair specimen of a six-foot three-inch biped."
and more or less erotic day-dreams are not uncommon in young men and especially in young women. Each individual has his own particular dream, which is always varying or developing, but, except in very imaginative persons, to no great extent. Such a day-dream is often founded on a basis of pleasurable personal experience, and develops on that basis. It may involve an element of perversity, even though that element finds no expression in real life. It is, of course, fostered by sexual abstinence; hence its frequency in young women. Most usually there is little attempt to realize it. It does not necessarily lead to masturbation, though it often causes some sexual congestion or even spontaneous sexual orgasm. The day-dream is a strictly private and intimate experience, not only from its very nature, but also because it occurs in images which the subject finds great difficulty in translating into language, even when willing to do so. In other cases it is elaborately dramatic or romantic in character, the hero or heroine passing through many experiences before attaining the erotic climax of the story. This climax tends to develop in harmony with the subject's growing knowledge or experience; at first, merely a kiss, it may develop into any refinement of voluptuous gratification. The day-dream may occur either in normal or abnormal persons. Rousseau, in his Confessions, describes such dreams, in his case combined with masochism and masturbation. A distinguished American novelist, Hamlin Garland, has admirably described in Rose of Dutcher's Coolly the part played in the erotic day-dreams of a healthy normal girl at adolescence by a circus-rider, seen on the first visit to a circus, and becoming a majestic ideal to dominate the girl's thoughts for many years.¹ Raffalovich² describes the process by which in sexual inverts the vision of a person of the same sex, perhaps seen in the streets or the theatre, is evoked in

¹ The case has been recorded of a married woman, in love with her doctor, who kept a day-dream diary, at last filling three bulky volumes, when it was discovered by her husband, and led to an action for divorce; it was shown that the doctor knew nothing of the romance in which he played the part of hero. Kiernan, in referring to this case (as recorded in John Paget's Judicial Puzzles), mentions a similar case in Chicago.

² Uranisme, p. 125.
solitary reveries, producing a kind of "psychic onanism," whether or not it leads on to physical manifestations.

Although day-dreaming of this kind has at present been very little studied, since it loves solitude and secrecy, and has never been counted of sufficient interest for scientific inquisition, it is really a process of considerable importance, and occupies a large part of the auto-erotic field. It is frequently cultivated by refined and imaginative young men and women who lead a chaste life and would often be repelled by masturbation. In such persons, under such circumstances, it must be considered as strictly normal, the inevitable outcome of the play of the sexual impulse. No doubt it may often become morbid, and is never a healthy process when indulged in to excess, as it is liable to be by refined young people with artistic impulses, to whom it is in the highest degree seductive and insidious. As we have seen, however, day-dreaming is far from always colored by sexual emotion; yet it is a significant indication of its really sexual origin that, as I have been informed by persons of both sexes, even in these apparently non-sexual cases it frequently ceases altogether on marriage.

Even when we have eliminated all these forms of auto-erotic activity, however refined, in which the subject takes a voluntary part, we have still left unexplored an important portion of the auto-erotic field, a portion which many people are alone inclined to consider normal: sexual orgasm during sleep. That under conditions of sexual abstinence in healthy individuals there must inevitably be some auto-erotic manifestations during waking life, a careful study of the facts compels us to believe. There can be no doubt, also, that, under the same conditions, the occurrence

1 The acute Anstie remarked, more than thirty years ago, in his work on *Neuralgia*: "It is a comparatively frequent thing to see an unsocial, solitary life (leading to the habit of masturbation) joined with the bad influence of an unhealthy ambition, prompting to premature and false work in literature and art." From the literary side, M. Léon Bazalgette has dealt with the tendency of much modern literature to devote itself to what he calls "mental onanism," of which the probable counterpart, he seems to hint, is a physical process of auto-erotism. (Léon Bazalgette, "L'ovanisme considéré comme principe createur en art," *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1898.)
of the complete orgasm during sleep with, in men, seminal emissions, is altogether normal. Even Zeus himself, as Pausanias has recorded, was liable to such accidents: a statement which, at all events, shows that to the Greek mind there was nothing derogatory in such an occurrence.\(^1\) The Jews, however, regarded it as an impurity,\(^2\) and the same idea was transmitted to the Christian church and embodied in the word *polutio*, by which the phenomenon was designated in ecclesiastical phraseology.\(^3\) According to Billuart and other theologians, pollution in sleep is not sin, unless voluntarily caused; if, however, it begins in sleep, and is completed in the half-waking state, with a sense of pleasure, it is a venial sin. But it seems allowable to permit a nocturnal pollution to complete itself on awaking, if it occurs without intention; and St. Thomas even says "*Si pollutio placet ut naturae exoneratio vel alleviatio, peccatum non creditur.*"

\(^1\) Pausanias, *Achaea*, Chapter XVII. The ancient Babylonians believed in a certain "maid of the night," who appeared to men in sleep and roused without satisfying their passions. (Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia*, p. 262.) This succubus was the Assyrian Liler, connected with the Hebrew Lilith. There was a corresponding incubus, "the little night man," who had nocturnal intercourse with women. (Cf. Ploss, *Das Weib*, 7th ed., pp. 521 *et seq.*.) The succubus and the incubus (the latter being more common) were adopted by Christendom: St. Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, Bk. XV, Ch. XXI) said that the wicked assaults of sylvans and fauns, otherwise called incubi, on women, are so generally affirmed that it would be impudent to deny them. Incubi flourished in mediaeval belief, and can scarcely, indeed, be said to be extinct even today. They have been studied by many authors: see, e.g., Dufour, *Histoire de la Prostitution*, vol. v, Ch. XXV. Saint-André, physician-in-ordinary to the French King, pointed out in 1725 that the incubus was a dream. It may be added that the belief in the succubus and incubus appears to be widespread. Thus, the West African Yorubas (according to A. B. Ellis) believe that erotic dreams are due to the god Elegba, who, either as a male or a female, consorts with men and women in sleep.

\(^2\) "If any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall bathe all his flesh in water and be unclean until the even. And every garment, and every skin, whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water and be unclean until the even." Leviticus, XV, v. 16-17.

\(^3\) It should be added that the term *pollutio* also covers voluntary effusion of semen outside copulation. (Debreyne, *Morchialogia*, p. 8; for a full discussion of the opinions of theologians concerning nocturnal and diurnal pollutions, see the same author's *Essai sur la Théologie Morale*, pp. 100-149.)
Notwithstanding the fair and logical position of the more distinguished Latin theologians, there has certainly been a widely prevalent belief in Catholic countries that pollution during sleep is a sin. In the "Parson's Tale," Chaucer makes the parson say: "Another sin appertaineth to lechery that cometh in sleeping; and the sin cometh oft to them that be maidens, and eke to them that be corrupt; and this sin men clepe pollution, that cometh in four manners;" these four manners being (1) languishing of body from rank and abundant humors, (2) infirmity, (3) surfeit of meat and drink, and (4) villainous thoughts. Four hundred years later, Madame Roland, in her Mémoires Particulières, presented a vivid picture of the anguish produced in an innocent girl's mind by the notion of the sinfulness of erotic dreams. She menstruated first at the age of 14. "Before this," she writes, "I had sometimes been awakened from the deepest sleep in a surprising manner. Imagination played no part; I exercised it on too many serious subjects, and my timorous conscience preserved it from amusement with other subjects, so that it could not represent what I would not allow it to seek to understand. But an extraordinary effervescence aroused my senses in the heat of repose, and, by virtue of my excellent constitution, operated by itself a purification which was as strange to me as its cause. The first feeling which resulted was, I know not why, a sort of fear. I had observed in my Philotée, that we are not allowed to obtain any pleasure from our bodies except in lawful marriage. What I had experienced could be called a pleasure. I was then guilty, and in a class of offences which caused me the most shame and sorrow, since it was that which was most displeasing to the Spotless Lamb. There was great agitation in my poor heart, prayers and mortifications. How could I avoid it? For, indeed, I had not foreseen it, but at the instant when I experienced it, I had not taken the trouble to prevent it. My watchfulness became extreme. I scrupulously avoided positions which I found specially exposed me to the accident. My restlessness became so great that at last I was able to awake before the catastrophe. When I was not in time to prevent it, I would jump out of bed, with naked feet on to the polished floor, and with crossed arms pray to the Saviour to preserve me from the wiles of the devil. I would then impose some penance on myself, and I have carried out to the letter what the prophet King probably only transmitted to us as a figure of Oriental speech, mixing ashes with my bread and watering it with my tears."

To the early Protestant mind, as illustrated by Luther, there was something diseased, though not impure, in sexual excitement during sleep; thus, in his Table Talk Luther remarks that girls who have such dreams should be married at once, "taking the
medicine which God has given.” It is only of comparatively recent years that medical science has obtained currency for the belief that this auto-erotic process is entirely normal. Blumenbach stated that nocturnal emissions are normal.\(^1\) Sir James Paget declared that he had never known celibate men who had not such emissions from once or twice a week to twice every three months, both extremes being within the limits of good health, while Sir Lauder Brunton considers once a fortnight or once a month about the usual frequency, at these periods the emissions often following two nights in succession. Rohleder believes that they may normally follow for several nights in succession. Hammond considers that they occur about once a fortnight.\(^2\) Ribbing regards ten to fourteen days as the normal interval.\(^3\) Löwenfeld puts the normal frequency at about once a week;\(^4\) this seems to be nearer the truth as regards most fairly healthy young men. In proof of this it is only necessary to refer to the exact records of healthy young adults summarized in the study of periodicity in the present volume. It occasionally happens, however, that nocturnal emissions are entirely absent. I am acquainted with some cases. In other fairly healthy young men they seldom occur except at times of intellectual activity or of anxiety and worry.

Lately there has been some tendency for medical opinion to revert to the view of Luther, and to regard sexual excitement during sleep as a somewhat unhealthy phenomenon. Moll is a distinguished advocate of this view. Sexual excitement during sleep is the normal result of celibacy, but it is another thing to say that it is, on that account, satisfactory. We might, then, Moll remarks, maintain that nocturnal incontinence of urine is satisfactory, since the bladder is thus emptied. Yet, we take every precaution against this by insisting that the bladder shall be emptied before going to sleep. (\textit{Libido Sexualis}, Bd. I. p. 552.) This remark is supported by the fact, to which I find that both men and women can bear witness, that sexual excitement during sleep is more fatiguing than in the waking state, though this is not an invariable

\(^1\) \textit{Memoirs}, translated by Bendyshe, p. 182.
\(^2\) \textit{Sexual Impotence}, p. 137.
\(^3\) \textit{L’Hygiène Sexuelle}, p. 169.
\(^4\) \textit{Sexualleben und Nervenleiden}, p. 164.
rule, and it is sometimes found to be refreshing. In a similar way, Eulenburg (*Sexuale Neuropathic*, p. 55) states that nocturnal emissions are no more normal than coughing or vomiting.

Nocturnal emissions are usually, though not invariably, accompanied by dreams of a voluptuous character in which the dreamer becomes conscious in a more or less fantastic manner of the more or less intimate presence or contact of a person of the opposite sex. It would seem, as a general rule, that the more vivid and voluptuous the dream, the greater is the physical excitement and the greater also the relief experienced on awakening. Sometimes the erotic dream occurs without any emission, and not infrequently the emission takes place after the dreamer has awakened.

The widest and most comprehensive investigation of erotic dreams is that carried out by Gualino, in northern Italy, and based on inquiries among 100 normal men—doctors, teachers, lawyers, etc.—who had all had experience of the phenomenon. (L. Gualino, "Il Sogno Erotico nell' Uomo Normale," *Rivista di Psicologia*, Jan.-Feb., 1907.) Gualino shows that erotic dreams, with emissions (whether or not seminal), began somewhat earlier than the period of physical development as ascertained by Marro for youths of the same part of northern Italy. Gualino found that all his cases had had erotic dreams at the age of seventeen; Marro found 8 per cent. of youths still sexually undeveloped at that age, and while sexual development began at thirteen years, erotic dreams began at twelve. Their appearance was preceded, in most cases for some months, by erections. In 37 per cent. of the cases there had been no actual sexual experiences (either masturbation or intercourse); in 23 per cent. there had been masturbation; in the rest, some form of sexual contact. The dreams are mainly visual, tacitual elements coming second, and the dramatis personæ is either an unknown woman (27 per cent. cases), or only known by sight (56 per cent.), and in the majority is, at all events in the beginning, an ugly or fantastic figure, becoming more attractive later in life, but never identical with the woman loved during waking life. This, as Gualino points out, accords with the general tendency for the emotions of the day to be latent in sleep. Masturbation only formed the subject of the dream in four cases. The emotional state in the pubertal stage, apart from pleasure, was anxiety (37 per cent.), desire (17 per cent.), fear (14 per cent.). In the adult stage, anxiety and fear receded to 7 per cent. and 6 per cent., respectively. Thirty-three of the subjects, as a result of sexual or general disturbances, had had nocturnal emissions
without dreams; these were always found exhausting. Normally (in more than 90 per cent.) erotic dreams are the most vivid of all dreams. In no case was there knowledge of any monthly or other cyclic periodicity in the occurrence of the manifestations. In 34 per cent. of cases, they tended to occur very soon after sexual intercourse. In numerous cases they were peculiarly frequent (even three in one night) during courtship, when the young man was in the habit of kissing and caressing his betrothed, but ceased after marriage. It was not noted that position in bed or a full bladder exerted any marked influence in the occurrence of erotic dreams; repletion of the seminal vesicles is regarded as the main factor.

In Germany erotic dreams have been discussed by Volkelt (Die Traum-Phantasie, 1875, pp. 78-82), and especially by Löwenfeld (Sexual-Probleme, Oct., 1908), while in America, Stanley Hall thus summarizes the general characteristics of erotic dreams in men: "In by far the most cases, consciousness, even when the act causes full awakening from sleep, finds only scattered images, single words, gestures, and acts, many of which would perhaps normally constitute no provocation. Many times the mental activity seems to be remote and incidental, and the mind retains in the morning nothing except, perhaps, a peculiar dress pattern, the shape of a finger-nail, the back of a neck, the toss of a head, the movement of a foot, or the dressing of the hair. In such cases, these images stand out for a time with the distinctness of a cameo, and suggest that the origin of erotic fetichisms is largely to be found in sensual dreams. Very rarely is there any imagery of the organs themselves, but the tendency to irradiation is so strong as to re-enforce the suggestion of so many other phenomena in this field, that nature designs this experience to be long circuited, and that it may give a peculiar ictus to almost any experience. When waking occurs just afterward, it seems at least possible that there may be much imagery that existed, but failed to be recalled to memory, possibly because the flow of psychic impressions was over very familiar fields, and this, therefore, was forgotten, while any eruption into new or unwonted channels, stood out with distinctness. All these psychic phenomena, although very characteristic of man in his prime, are not so of the dreams of dawning puberty, which are far more vivid." (G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, vol. i, p. 455.)

I may, further, quote the experience of an anonymous contributor—a healthy and chaste man between 30 and 38 years of age—to the American Journal of Psychology ("Nocturnal Emissions," Jan., 1904): "Legs and breasts often figured prominently in these dreams, the other sexual parts, however, very seldom, and then they turned out to be male organs in most cases. There were but two instances of copulation dreamt. Girls and young women were the usual dramatis personae,
and, curiously enough, often the aggressors. Sometimes the face or faces were well known; sometimes, only once seen; sometimes, entirely unknown. The orgasm occurs at the most erotic part of the dream, the physical and psychical running parallel. This most erotic or suggestive part of the dream was very often quite an innocent looking incident enough. As, for example: while passing a strange young woman, overtaken on the street, she calls after me some question. At first, I pay no heed, but when she calls again, I hesitate whether to turn back and answer or not—emission. Again, walking beside a young woman, she said, ‘Shall I take your arm?’ I offered it, and she took it, entwining her arm around it, and raising it high—emission. I could feel stronger erection as she asked the question. Sometimes, a word was enough; sometimes, a gesture. Once emission took place on my noticing the young woman’s diminished finger-nails. Another example of fetichism was my being curiously attracted in a dream by the pretty embroidered figure on a little girl’s dress. As an illustration of the strange metamorphoses that occur in dreams, I one night, in my dream (I had been observing partridges in the summer) fell in love with a partridge, which changed under my caresses to a beautiful girl, who yet retained an indescribable wild-bird innocence, grace, and charm—a sort of Undina!"

These experiences may be regarded as fairly typical of the erotic dreams of healthy and chaste young men. The bird, for instance, that changes into a woman while retaining some elements of the bird, has been encountered in erotic dreams by other young men. It is indeed remarkable that, as De Gubernatis observes, “the bird is a well-known phallic symbol,” while Maeder finds (“Interprétations de Quelques Rêves,” Archives de Psychologie, April, 1907) that birds have a sexual significance both in life and in dreams. The appearance of male organs in the dream-woman is doubtless due to the dreamer’s greater familiarity with those organs; but, though it occurs occasionally, it can scarcely be said to be the rule in erotic dreams. Even men who have never had connection with a woman, are quite commonly aware of the presence of a woman’s sexual organs in their erotic dreams.

Moll’s comparison of nocturnal emissions of semen with nocturnal incontinence of urine suggests an interesting resemblance, and at the same time seeming contrast. In both cases we are concerned with viscerae which, when overfilled or unduly irritable, spasmodically eject their contents during sleep. There is a further resemblance which usually becomes clear when, as occasionally happens, nocturnal incontinence of urine persists on to late childhood or adolescence: both phenomena are frequently accompanied by vivid dreams of appropriate character. (See e.g. Ries, “Ueber Enuresis Nocturna,” Monatsschrift für Harnkrankheiten und Sexuelle Hygiene, 1904; A. P. Buchan, nearly
a century ago, pointed out the psychic element in the experiences of young persons who wetted the bed, *Venus sine Concubitu*, 1810, p. 47.) Thus, in one case known to me, a child of seven, who occasionally wetted the bed, usually dreamed at the same time that she wanted to make water, and was out of doors, running to find a suitable spot, which she at last found, and, on awaking, discovered that she had wetted the bed; fifteen years later she still sometimes had similar dreams, which caused her much alarm until, when thoroughly awake, she realized that no accident had happened; these later dreams were not the result of any actual strong desire to urinate. In another case with which I am acquainted, a little girl of eight, after mental excitement or indigestible meals, occasionally wetted the bed, dreaming that she was frightened by some one running after her, and wetted herself in consequence, after the manner of the Ganymede in the eagle's clutch, as depicted by Rembrandt. These two cases, it may be noted, belong to two quite different types. In the first case, the full bladder suggests to imagination the appropriate actions for relief, and the bladder actually accepts the imaginative solution offered: it is, according to Fiorani's phrase, "somnambulism of the bladder." In the other case, there is no such somnambulism, but a psychic and nervous disturbance, not arising in the bladder at all, irradiates convulsively, and whether or not the bladder is overfull, attacks a vesical nervous system which is not yet sufficiently well-balanced to withstand the inflow of excitement. In children of somewhat nervous temperament, manifestations of this kind may occur as an occasional accident, up to about the age of seven or eight; and thereafter, the nervous control of the bladder having become firmly established, they cease to happen, the nervous energy required to affect the bladder sufficing to awake the dreamer. In very rare cases, however, the phenomenon may still occasionally happen, even in adolescence or later, in individuals who are otherwise quite free from it. This is most apt to occur in young women even in waking life. In men it is probably extremely rare.

The erotic dream seems to differ flagrantly from the vesical dream, in that it occurs in adult life, and is with difficulty brought under control. The contrast is, however, very superficial. When we remember that sexual activity only begins normally at puberty, we realize that the youth of twenty is, in the matter of sexual control, scarcely much older than in the matter of vesical control he was at the age of six. Moreover, if we were habitually, from our earliest years, to go to bed with a full bladder, as the chaste man goes to bed with unrelieved sexual system, it would be fully as difficult to gain vesical control during sleep as it now is to gain sexual control. Ultimately, such sexual control is attained; after the age of forty, it seems that erotic dreams with emission become more and more rare; either the dream occurs with-
out actual emission, exactly as dreams of urination occur in adults with full bladder, or else the organic stress, with or without dreams, serves to awaken the sleeper before any emission has occurred. But this stage is not easily or completely attained. St. Augustine, even at the period when he wrote his Confessions, mentions, as a matter of course, that sexual dreams "not merely arouse pleasure, but gain the consent of the will." (X. 41.) Not infrequently there is a struggle in sleep, just as the hypnotic subject may resist suggestions; thus, a lady of thirty-five dreamed a sexual dream, and awoke without excitement; again she fell asleep, and had another dream of sexual character, but resisted the tendency to excitement, and again awoke; finally, she fell asleep and had a third sexual dream, which was this time accompanied by the orgasm. (This has recently been described also by Nücke, who terms it pollutio interrupta, Neurologisches Centralblatt, Oct. 16, 1909; the corresponding voluntary process in the waking state is described by Rohleder and termed masturbatio interrupta, Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft, Aug., 1908.) The factors involved in the acquirement of vesical and sexual control during sleep are the same, but the conditions are somewhat different.

There is a very intimate connection between the vesical and the sexual spheres, as I have elsewhere pointed out (see e.g. in the third volume of these Studies, "Analysis of the Sexual Impulse"). This connection is psychic as well as organic. Both in men and women, a full bladder tends to develop erotic dreams. (See e.g. K. A. Scherner, Das Leben des Traums, 1801, pp. 187 et seq.; Spitta also points out the connection between vesical and erotic dreams, Die Schlaf und Traumzustände, 2d ed., 1882, pp. 250 et seq.) Raymond and Janet state (Les Obsessions, vol. ii, p. 135) that nocturnal incontinence of urine, accompanied by dreams of urination, may be replaced at puberty by masturbation. In the reverse direction, Freud believes (Monatsschrift für Psychiatria, Bd. XVIII, p. 433) that masturbation plays a large part in causing the bed-wetting of children who have passed the age when that usually ceases, and he even finds that children are themselves aware of the connection.

The diagnostic value of sexual dreams, as an indication of the sexual nature of the subject when awake, has been emphasized by various writers. (E.g., Moll, Die Konträre Sexualempfindung, Ch. IX; Nücke, "Der Traum als feinstes Reagens für die Art des sexuellen Empfindens," Monatsschrift für Kriminalpsychologic, 1905, p. 500.) Sexual dreams tend to reproduce, and even to accentuate, those characteristics which make the strongest sexual appeal to the subject when awake.

At the same time, this general statement has to be qualified, more especially as regards inverted dreams. In the first place, a young man, however normal, who is not familiar with the feminine body when
awake, is not likely to see it when asleep, even in dreams of women; in the second place, the confusions and combinations of dream imagery often tend to obliterate sexual distinctions, however free from perversions the subjects may be. Thus, a correspondent tells me of a healthy man, of very pure character, totally inexperienced in sexual matters, and never having seen a woman naked, who, in his sexual dreams, always sees the woman with male organs, though he has never had any sexual inclinations for men, and is much in love with a lady. The confusions and associations of dream imagery, leading to abnormal combinations, may be illustrated by a dream which once occurred to me after reading Jocot's account of how a young negress, whose tattoo-marks he was sketching, having become bored, suddenly pressed her hands to her breasts, spitting two streams of lukewarm milk into his face, and ran away laughing; I dreamed of a woman performing a similar action, not from her breasts, however, but from a penis with which she was furnished. Again, by another kind of confusion, a man dreams sexually that he is with a man, although the figure of the partner revealed in the dream is a woman. The following dream, in a normal man who had never been, or wished to be, in the position shown by the dream, may be quoted: "I dreamed that I was a big boy, and that a younger boy lay close beside me, and that we (or, certainly, he) had seminal emissions; I was complacently passive, and had a feeling of shame when the boy was discovered. On awaking I found I had had no emission, but was lying very close to my wife. The day before, I had seen boys in a swimming-match." This was, it seems to me, an example of dream confusion, and not an erotic inverted dream. (Näcke also brings forward inverted dreams by normal persons; see e.g. his "Beiträge zu den sexuellen Träumen." Archiv für Kriminalanthropologie, Bd. XX, 1908, p. 360.)

So far as I have been able to ascertain, there seem to be, generally speaking, certain differences in the manifestations of auto-eroticism during sleep in men and women which I believe to be not without psychological significance. In men the phenomenon is fairly simple; it usually appears about puberty, continues at intervals of varying duration during sexual life provided the individual is living chastely, and is generally, though not always, accompanied by erotic dreams which lead up to the climax, its occurrence being, to some extent, influenced by a variety of circumstances: physical, mental, or emotional excitement, alcohol taken before retiring, position in bed (as lying on the back), the state of the bladder, sometimes the mere fact of
being in a strange bed, and to some extent apparently by the existence of monthly and yearly rhythms. On the whole, it is a fairly definite and regular phenomenon which usually leaves little conscious trace on awaking, beyond probably some sense of fatigue and, occasionally, a headache. In women, however, the phenomena of auto-erotism during sleep seem to be much more irregular, varied, and diffused. So far as I have been able to make inquiries, it is the exception rather than the rule for girls to experience definitely erotic dreams about the period of puberty or adolescence.¹ Auto-erotic phenomena during sleep in women who have never experienced the orgasm when awake are usually of a very vague kind; while it is the rule in a chaste youth for the orgasm thus to manifest itself, it is the exception in a chaste girl. It is not, as a rule, until the orgasm has been definitely produced in the waking state—under whatever conditions it may have been produced—that it begins to occur during sleep, and even in a strongly sexual woman living a repressed life it is often comparatively infrequent.² Thus, a young medical woman who endeavors to deal strenuously with her physical sexual emotions writes: “I sleep soundly, and do not dream at all. Occasionally, but very rarely, I have had sensations which awakened me suddenly. They can scarcely be called dreams, for they are mere impulses, nothing connected or coherent, yet prompted, I know, by sexual feeling. This is probably an experience common to all.” Another lady (with a restrained psycho-sexual tendency to be attracted to both sexes), states that her first sexual sensations with orgasm were felt in dreams at the age of 16, but these dreams, which she has now forgotten, were not agreeable and not erotic; two or three years later spontaneous orgasm began to

¹ I may here refer to the curious opinion expressed by Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, that, while the sexual impulse in man is usually relieved by seminal emissions during sleep, in women it is relieved by the occurrence of menstruation. This latter statement is flagrantly at variance with the facts; but it may perhaps be quoted in support of the view expressed above as to the comparative rarity of sexual excitement during sleep in young girls.

² Löwenfeld has recently expressed the same opinion. Rohledér believes that pollutions are physically impossible in a real virgin, but that opinion is too extreme.
occur occasionally when awake, and after this, orgasm took place regularly once or twice a week in sleep, but still without erotic dreams; she merely dreamt that the orgasm was occurring and awoke as it took place.

It is possible that to the comparative rarity in chaste women of complete orgasm during sleep, we may in part attribute the violence with which repressed sexual emotion in women often manifests itself.¹ There is thus a difference here between men and women which is of some significance when we are considering the natural satisfaction of the sexual impulse in chaste women.

In women, who have become accustomed to sexual intercourse, erotic dreams of fully developed character occur, with complete orgasm and accompanying relief—as may occasionally be the case in women who are not acquainted with actual intercourse;² some women, however, even when familiar with actual coitus, find that sexual dreams, though accompanied by emissions, are only the symptoms of desire and do not produce actual relief.

Some interest attaches to cases in which young women, even girls at puberty, experience dreams of erotic character, or at all events dream concerning coitus or men in erection, although they

¹ It may be added that in more or less neurotic women and girls, erotic dreams may be very frequent and depressing. Thus, J. M. Fothergill (West-Riding Asylum Report, 1876, vol. vi) remarks: "These dreams are much more frequent than is ordinarily thought, and are the cause of a great deal of nervous depression among women. Women of a highly-nervous diathesis suffer much more from these drains than robust women. Not only are these involuntary orgasms more frequent among such women, but they cause more disturbance of the general health in them than in other women."

² I may remark here that a Russian correspondent considers that I have greatly underestimated the frequency of erotic manifestations during sleep in young girls. “All the women I have interrogated on this point,” he informs me, “say that they have had such pollutions from the time of puberty, or even earlier, accompanied by erotic dreams. I have put the question to some twenty or thirty women. It is true that they were of southern race (Italian, Spanish, and French), and I believe that Southerners are, in this matter, franker than northern women, who consider the activity of the flesh as shameful, and seek to conceal it.” My correspondent makes no reference to the chief point of sexual difference, so far as my observation goes, which is that erotic dreams are comparatively rare in those women who have yet had no sort of sexual experience in waking life.” Whether or not this is correct, I do not question the frequency of erotic dreams in girls who have had such experience.
profess, and almost certainly with truth, to be quite ignorant of sexual phenomena. Several such dreams of remarkable character have been communicated to me. One can imagine that the psychologists of some schools would see in these dreams the spontaneous eruption of the experiences of the race. I am inclined to regard them as forgotten memories, such as we know to occur sometimes in sleep. The child has somehow seen or heard of sexual phenomena and felt no interest, and the memory may subsequently be aroused in sleep, under the stimulation of new-born sexual sensations.

It is a curious proof of the ignorance which has prevailed in recent times concerning the psychic sexual nature of women that, although in earlier ages the fact that women are normally liable to erotic dreams was fully recognized, in recent times it has been denied, even by writers who have made a special study of the sexual impulse in women. Eulenburg (Sexuale Neuropathie, 1895, pp. 31, 79) appears to regard the appearances of sexual phenomena during sleep, in women, as the result of masturbation. Adler, in what is in many respects an extremely careful study of sexual phenomena in women (Die Mangelfhafte Geschlechtsempfindung des Weibes, 1904, p. 130), boldly states that they do not have erotic dreams. In 1847, E. Guibout (“Des Pollutions Involontaires chez la Femme,” Union Médicale, p. 260) presented the case of a married lady who masturbated from the age of ten, and continued the practice, even after her marriage at twenty-four, and at twenty-nine began to have erotic dreams with emissions every few nights, and later sometimes even several times a night, though they ceased to be voluptuous; he believed the case to be the first ever reported of such a condition in a woman. Yet, thousands of years ago, the Indian of Vedic days recognized erotic dreams in women as an ordinary and normal occurrence. (Löwenfeld quotes a passage to this effect from the Oupnek’hát, Sexualleben und Nervenleiden, 2d ed., p. 114.) Even savages recognize the occurrence of erotic dreams in women as normal, for the Papuans, for instance, believe that a young girl’s first menstruation is due to intercourse with the moon in the shape of a man, the girl dreaming that a man is embracing her. (Reports Cambridge Expedition to Torres Straits, vol. v, p. 206.) In the seventeenth century, Rolfinclus, in a well-informed study (De Pollutione Nocturna, a Jena Inaugural Dissertation, 1667), concluded that women experience such manifestations, and quotes Aristotle, Galen, and Fernelius, in the same sense. Sir Thomas Overbury, in his Characters, written in the early part of the same century, describing the ideal milkmaid, says that “her
dreams are so chaste that she dare tell them," clearly implying that it was not so with most women. The notion that women are not subject to erotic dreams thus appears to be of comparatively recent origin.

One of the most interesting and important characters by which the erotic dreams of women—and, indeed, their dreams generally—differ from those of men is in the tendency to evoke a repercussion on the waking life, a tendency more rarely noted in men’s erotic dreams, and then only to a minor extent. This is very common, even in healthy and normal women, and is exaggerated to a high degree in neurotic subjects, by whom the dream may even be interpreted as a reality, and so declared on oath, a fact of practical importance.

Hersman—having met with a case in which a school-girl with chorea, after having dreamed of an assault, accused the principal of a school of assault, securing his conviction—obtained the opinions of various American alienists as to the frequency with which such dreams in unstable mental subjects lead to delusions and criminal accusations. Dercum, H. C. Wood, and Rohé had not personally met with such cases; Burr believed that there was strong evidence "that a sexual dream may be so vivid as to make the subject believe she has had sexual congress"; Kiernan knew of such cases; C. H. Hughes, in persons with every appearance of sanity, had known the erotic dreams of the night to become the erotic delusions of the day, the patient protesting violently the truth of her story; while Hersman reports the case of a young lady in an asylum who had nightly delusions that a medical officer visited her every night, and had to do with her,

---

1 C. C. Hersman, "Medico-legal Aspects of Eroto-Choreic Insanities," *Alienist and Neurologist*, July, 1897. I may mention that Pitres (Leçons cliniques sur l'Hystérique, vol. ii, p. 34) records the almost identical case of a hysterical girl in one of his wards, who was at first grateful to the clinical clerk to whom her case was intrusted, but afterward changed her behavior, accused him of coming nightly through the window, lying beside her, caressing her, and then exerting violent coitus three or four times in succession, until she was utterly exhausted. I may here refer to the tendency to erotic excitement in women under the influence of chloroform and nitrous oxide, a tendency rarely or never noted in men, and of the frequency with which the phenomenon is attributed by the subject to actual assault. See H. Ellis, *Man and Woman*, pp. 269-274.
coming up the hot-air flue. I am acquainted with a similar case in a clever, but highly neurotic, young woman, who writes: "For years I have been trying to stamp out my passionate nature, and was beginning to succeed when a strange thing happened to me last autumn. One night, as I lay in bed, I felt an influence so powerful that a man seemed present with me. I crimsoned with shame and wonder. I remember that I lay upon my back, and marveled when the spell had passed. The influence, I was assured, came from a priest whom I believed in and admired above everyone in the world. I had never dreamed of love in connection with him, because I always thought him so far above me. The influence has been upon me ever since—sometimes by day and nearly always by night; from it I generally go into a deep sleep, which lasts until morning. I am always much refreshed when I awake. This influence has the best effect upon my life that anything has ever had as regards health and mind. It is the knowledge that I am loved fittingly that makes me so indifferent to my future. What worries me is that I sometimes wonder if I suffer from a nervous disorder merely." The subject thus seemed to regard these occurrences as objectively caused, but was sufficiently sane to wonder whether her experiences were not due to mental disorder.¹

The tendency of the auto-erotic phenomena of sleep to be manifested with such energy as to flow over into the waking life and influence conscious emotion and action, while very well marked in normal and healthy women, is seen to an exaggerated extent in hysterical women, in whom it has, therefore, chiefly been studied. Sante de Sanctis, who has investigated the dreams of many classes of people, remarks on the frequently sexual character of the dreams of hysterical women, and the repercussion of

¹ In Australia, some years ago, a man was charged with rape, found guilty of "attempt," and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, on the accusation of a girl of 13, who subsequently confessed that the charge was imaginary; in this case, the jury found it impossible to believe that so young a girl could have been lying, or hallucinated, because she narrated the details of the alleged offence with such circumstantial detail. Such cases are not uncommon, and in some measure, no doubt, they may be accounted for by auto-erotic nocturnal hallucinations.
such dreams on the waking life of the following day; he gives
a typical case of hysterical erotic dreaming in an uneducated
servant-girl of 23, in whom such dreams occur usually a few days
before the menstrual period; her dreams, especially if erotic,
make an enormous impression on her; in the morning she is
bad-tempered if they were unpleasant, while she feels lascivious
and gives herself up to masturbation if she has had erotic dreams
of men; she then has a feeling of pleasure throughout the day,
and her sexual organs are bathed with moisture.\footnote{Sante de Sanctis, \textit{I sogni e il sonno nell'isterismo e nella epilessia},
Rome, 1896, p. 101.}

\footnote{Pitres, \textit{Leçons cliniques sur l'Hystérie}, vol. ii, pp. 37 \textit{et seq.} The Lorraine inquisitor, Nicolas Remy, very carefully investigated the
question of the feelings of witches when having intercourse with the Devil,
questioning them minutely. and ascertained that such intercourse was
usually extremely painful, filling them with icy horror (See, \textit{e.g.}, Dufour,
\textit{Histoire de la Prostitution}, vol. v, p. 127; the same author presents an
interesting summary of the phenomena of the Witches' Sabbath). But
intercourse with the Devil was by no means always painful. Isabel
Gowdie, a Scotch witch, bore clear testimony to this point: \textit{“The
youngest and lustiest women,”} she stated, \textit{“will have very great pleasure
in their carnal copulation with him, yea, much more than with their
own husbands. \ldots \thinspace He is abler for us than any man can be.}
DRAWAL AND TORE THE VAGINA.” (It seems probable, I may remark, that the witches’ representations, both of the devil and of sexual intercourse, were largely influenced by familiarity with the coupling of animals). As Gilles de la Tourette is careful to warn his readers, we must not too hastily assume, from the prevalence of nocturnal auto-erotic phenomena in hysterical women, that such women are necessarily sexual and libidinous in excess; the disorder is in them psychic, he points out, and not physical, and they usually receive sexual approaches with indifference and repugnance, because their sexual centres are anaesthetic or hyperesthetic. “During the period of sexual activity they seek much more the care and delicate attention of men than the genital act, which they often only tolerate. Many households, begun under the happiest auspices—the bride all the more apt to believe that she loves her betrothed in virtue of her suggestibility, easily exalted, perhaps at the expense of the senses—become hells on earth. The sexual act has for the hysterical woman more than one disillusion; she cannot understand it; it inspires her with insurmountable repugnance.”¹ I refer to these hysterical phenomena because they present to us, in an extreme form, facts which are common among women whom, under the artificial conditions of civilized life, we are compelled to regard as ordinarily healthy and normal. The frequent painfulness of auto-erotic phenomena is by no means an exclusively hysterical phenomenon, although often seen in a heightened form in hysterical conditions. It is probably to some extent simply the result of a conflict in consciousness with a merely physical impulse which is strong enough to assert itself in spite of the emotional and intellectual abhorrence of the subject. It is thus but an extreme

(Alack! that I should compare him to a man!)” Yet her description scarcely sounds attractive; he was a “large, black, hairy man, very cold, and I found his nature as cold within me as spring well-water.” His foot was forked and cloven; he was sometimes like a deer, or a roe; and he would hold up his tail while the witches kissed that region (Pitcairn, Criminal Trials in Scotland, vol. iii. Appendix VII; see, also, the illustrations at the end of Dr. A. Marie’s Folie et Mysticisme, 1907).

¹Gilles de la Tourette, loc. cit., p. 518. Erotic hallucinations have also been studied by Bellamy, in a Bordeaux thesis, Hallucinations Erotiques, 1900-1901.
form of the disgust which all sexual physical manifestations tend
to inspire in a person who is not inclined to respond to them.
Somewhat similar psychic disgust and physical pain are pro-
duced in the attempts to stimulate the sexual emotions and organs
when these are exhausted by exercise. In the detailed history
which Moll presents, of the sexual experiences of a sister in an
American nursing guild,—a most instructive history of a woman
fairly normal except for the results of repressed sexual emotion,
and with strong moral tendencies,—various episodes are narrated
well illustrating the way in which sexual excitement becomes
unpleasant or even painful when it takes place as a physical re-
flex which the emotions and intellect are all the time struggling
against. 1 It is quite probable, however, that there is a physio-
logical, as well as a psychic, factor in this phenomenon, and
Sollier, in his elaborate study of the nature and genesis of
hysteria, by insisting on the capital importance of the disturb-
ance of sensibility in hysteria, and the definite character of the
phenomena produced in the passage between anaesthesia and nor-
mal sensation, has greatly helped to reveal the mechanism of this
feature of auto-erotic excitement in the hysterical.

No doubt there has been a tendency to exaggerate the un-
pleasant character of the auto-erotic phenomena of hysteria.
That tendency was an inevitable reaction against an earlier view,
according to which hysteria was little more than an unconscious
expression of the sexual emotions and as such was unscientifically
dismissed without any careful investigation. I agree with Breuer
and Freud that the sexual needs of the hysterical are just as in-
dividual and various as those of normal women, but that they
suffer from them more, largely through a moral struggle with

1 On one occasion, when still a girl, whenever an artist whom she
admired touched her hand she felt erection and moisture of the sexual
parts, but without any sensation of pleasure; a little later, when an
uncle's knee casually came in contact with her thigh, ejaculation of
mucus took place, though she disliked the uncle; again, when a nurse,
on casually seeing a man's sexual organs, an electric shock went through
her, though the sight was disgusting to her; and when she had once to
assist a man to urinate, she became in the highest degree excited, though
without pleasure, and lay down on a couch in the next room, while a
conclusive ejaculation took place. (Moll, Libido Sexualis, Bd. I, p. 354.)
their own instincts, and the attempt to put them into the background of consciousness. In many hysterical and psychically abnormal women, auto-erotic phenomena, and sexual phenomena generally, are highly pleasurable, though such persons may be quite innocent of any knowledge of the erotic character of the experience. I have come across interesting and extreme examples of this in the published experiences of the women followers of the American religious leader, T. L. Harris, founder of the “Brotherhood of the New Life.” Thus, in a pamphlet entitled “Internal Respiration,” by Respiro, a letter is quoted from a lady physician, who writes: “One morning I awoke with a strange new feeling in the womb, which lasted for a day or two; I was so very happy, but the joy was in my womb, not in my heart.”

“At last,” writes a lady quoted in the same pamphlet, “I fell into a slumber, lying on my back with arms and feet folded, a position I almost always find myself in when I awake, no matter in which position I may go to sleep. Very soon I awoke from this slumber with a most delightful sensation, every fibre tingling with an exquisite glow of warmth. I was lying on my left side (something I am never able to do), and was folded in the arms of my counterpart. Unless you have seen it, I cannot give you an idea of the beauty of his flesh, and with what joy I beheld and felt it. Think of it, luminous flesh; and Oh! such tints, you never could imagine without seeing. He folded me so closely in his arms,” etc. In such cases there is no conflict between the physical and the psychic, and therefore the resulting excitement is pleasurable and not painful.

At this point our study of auto-erotism brings us into the sphere of mysticism. Leuba, in a penetrating and suggestive essay on Christian mysticism, after quoting the present Study, refers to the famous passages in which St. Theresa describes how a beautiful little angel inserted a flame-tipped dart into her

1 Breuer and Freud, Studien über Hysteric, 1895, p. 217.

2 Calmeil (De la Folie, vol. i, p. 252) called attention to the large part played by uterine sensations in the hallucinations of some famous women ascetics, and added: “It is well recognized that the narrative of such sensations nearly always occupies the first place in the divagations of hysterical virgins.”
heart until it descended into her bowels and left her inflamed with divine love. "What physiological difference," he asks, "is there between this voluptuous sensation and that enjoyed by the disciple of the Brotherhood of New Life? St. Theresa says 'bowels,' the woman doctor says 'womb,' that is all."¹

The extreme form of auto-erotism is the tendency for the sexual emotion to be absorbed and often entirely lost in self-admiration. This Narcissus-like tendency, of which the normal germ in women is symbolized by the mirror, is found in a minor degree in some men, and is sometimes well marked in women, usually in association with an attraction for other persons, to which attraction it is, of course, normally subservient. "The mirror," remarks Bloch (Beiträge I, p. 201), "plays an important part in the genesis of sexual aberration. . . . It cannot be doubted that many a boy and girl have first experienced sexual excitement at the sight of their own bodies in a mirror."

Valera, the Spanish novelist, very well described this impulse in his Genio y Figura. Rafaela, the heroine of this novel, says that, after her bath: "I fall into a puerility which may be innocent or vicious, I cannot decide. I only know that it is a purely contemplative act, a disinterested admiration of beauty. It is not coarse sensuality, but aesthetic platonism. I imitate Narcissus; and I apply my lips to the cold surface of the mirror and kiss my image. It is the love of beauty, the expression of tenderness and affection for what God has made manifest, in an ingenuous kiss imprinted on the empty and incorporeal reflection." In the same spirit the real heroine of the Tagebuch einer Verlorenen (p. 114), at the point when she was about to become a prostitute, wrote: "I am pretty. It gives me pleasure to throw off my clothes, one by one, before the mirror, and to look at myself, just as I am, white as snow and straight as a fir, with my long, fine, hair, like a cloak of black silk. When I spread abroad the black stream of it, with both hands, I am like a white swan with black wings."

A typical case known to me is that of a lady of 28, brought up on a farm. She is a handsome woman, of very large and fine proportions, active and healthy and intelligent, with, however, no marked sexual attraction to the opposite sex; at the same time she is not inverted, though she would like to be a man, and has a considerable degree of contempt for women. She has an intense admiration for her own

person, especially her limbs; she is never so happy as when alone and naked in her own bedroom, and, so far as possible, she cultivates nakedness. She knows by heart the various measurements of her body, is proud of the fact that they are strictly in accordance with the canons of proportion, and she laughs proudly at the thought that her thigh is larger than many a woman's waist. She is frank and assured in her manners, without sexual shyness, and, while willing to receive the attention and admiration of others, she makes no attempt to gain it, and seems never to have experienced any emotions stronger than her own pleasure in herself. I should add that I have had no opportunity of detailed examination, and cannot speak positively as to the absence of masturbation.

In the extreme form in which alone the name of Narcissus may properly be invoked, there is comparative indifference to sexual intercourse or even the admiration of the opposite sex. Such a condition seems to be rare, except, perhaps, in insanity. Since I called attention to this form of auto-erotism (Alienist and Neurologist, April, 1898), several writers have discussed the condition, especially Nääke, who, following out the suggestion, terms the condition Narcissism. Among 1,500 insane persons, Nääke has found it in four men and one woman (Psychiatrische en Neurologische Bladen, No. 2, 1899). Dr. C. H. Hughes writes (in a private letter) that he is acquainted with such cases, in which men have been absorbed in admiration of their own manly forms, and of their sexual organs, and women, likewise, absorbed in admiration of their own mammae and physical proportions, especially of limbs. "The whole subject," he adds, "is a singular phase of psychology, and it is not all morbid psychology, either. It is closely allied to that aesthetic sense which admires the nude in art."

Féré (L'Instinct Sexuel, 2d ed., p. 271) mentions a woman who experienced sexual excitement in kissing her own hand. Nääke knew a woman in an asylum who, during periodical fits of excitement, would kiss her own arms and hands, at the same time looking like a person in love. He also knew a young man with dementia praecox, who would kiss his own image ("Der Kuss bei Geisteskranken," Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie, Bd. LXIII, p. 127). Moll refers to a young homosexual lawyer, who experienced great pleasure in gazing at himself in a mirror (Konträre Sexualempfindung, 3d ed., p. 228), and mentions another inverted man, an admirer of the nates of men, who, changing to observe his own nates in a mirror, when changing his shirt, was struck by their beauty, and subsequently found pleasure in admiring them (Libido Sexualis, Bd. I, Theil I, p. 60). Krafft-Ebing knew a man who masturbated before a mirror, imagining, at the same time, how much better a real lover would be.
The best-observed cases of Narcissism have, however, been recorded by Rohleder, who confers upon this condition the ponderous name of automonosexualism, and believes that it has not been previously observed (H. Rohleder, Der Automonosexualismus, being Heft 225 of Berliner Klinik, March, 1907). In the two cases investigated by Rohleder, both men, there was sexual excitement in the contemplation of the individual's own body, actually or in a mirror, with little or no sexual attraction to other persons. Rohleder is inclined to regard the condition as due to a congenital defect in the "sexual centre" of the brain.
II.

Hysteria and the Question of Its Relation to the Sexual Emotions—The Early Greek Theories of its Nature and Causation—The Gradual Rise of Modern Views—Charcot—The Revolt Against Charcot’s Too Absolute Conclusions—Fallacies Involved—Charcot’s Attitude the Outcome of his Personal Temperament—Breuer and Freud—Their Views Supplement and Complete Charcot’s—At the Same Time they Furnish a Justification for the Earlier Doctrine of Hysteria—But They Must Not be Regarded as Final—The Diffused Hysteroid Condition in Normal Persons—The Physiological Basis of Hysteria—True Pathological Hysteria is Linked on to almost Normal States, especially to Sex-hunger.

The nocturnal hallucinations of hysteria, as all careful students of this condition now seem to agree, are closely allied to the hysterical attack proper. Sollier, indeed, one of the ablest of the more recent investigators of hysteria, has argued with much force that the subjects of hysteria really live in a state of pathological sleep, of vigilambulism.\(^1\) He regards all the various accidents of hysteria as having a common basis in disturbances of sensibility, in the widest sense of the word “sensibility,”—as the very foundation of personality,—while anaesthesia is “the real sigillum hysteriae.” Whatever the form of hysteria, we are thus only concerned with a more or less profound state of vigilambulism: a state in which the subject seems, often even to himself, to be more or less always asleep, whether the sleep may be regarded as local or general. Sollier agrees with Féré that the disorder of sensibility may be regarded as due to an exhaustion of the sensory centres of the brain, whether as the

\(^{1}\) *Genèse et Nature de l'Hystérice*, 1898; and, for Sollier’s latest statement, see “Hystérie et Sommeil,” *Archives de Neurologie*, May and June, 1907. Lombroso (L’Uomo Delinquente, 1889, vol. ii, p. 329), referring to the diminished metabolism of the hysterical, had already compared them to hibernating animals, while Babinsky states that the hysterical are in a state of subconsciousness, a state, as Metchnikoff remarks (*Essais optimites*, p. 270), reminiscent of our prehistoric past.
result of constitutional cerebral weakness, of the shock of a vio-
lent emotion, or of some toxic influence on the cerebral cells.

We may, therefore, fitly turn from the auto-erotic phe-
nomena of sleep which in women generally, and especially in
hysterical women, seem to possess so much importance and sig-
nificance, to the question—which has been so divergently an-
swered at different periods and by different investigators—
concerning the causation of hysteria, and especially concerning
its alleged connection with conscious or unconscious sexual
emotion.¹

It was the belief of the ancient Greeks that hysteria came
from the womb; hence its name. We first find that statement
in Plato's *Timæus*: “In men the organ of generation—becom-
ing rebellious and masterful, like an animal disobedient to
reason, and maddened with the sting of lust—seeks to gain ab-
solute sway; and the same is the case with the so-called womb,
or uterus, of women; the animal within them is desirous of pro-
creating children, and, when remaining unfruitful long beyond
its proper time, gets discontented and angry, and, wandering in
every direction through the body, closes up the passages of the
breath, and, by obstructing respiration,² drives them to extremity,
causing all varieties of disease.”

Plato, it is true, cannot be said to reveal anywhere a very
scientific attitude toward Nature. Yet he was here probably
only giving expression to the current medical doctrine of his day.
We find precisely the same doctrine attributed to Hippocrates,

¹ Professor Freud, while welcoming the introduction of the term
“auto-erotism,” remarks that it should not be made to include the whole
of hysteria. This I fully admit, and have never questioned. Hysteria
is far too large and complex a phenomenon to be classed as entirely a
manifestation of auto-erotism, but certain aspects of it are admirable
illustrations of auto-erotic transformation.

² The hysterical phenomenon of *globus hystericus* was long after-
ward attributed to obstruction of respiration by the womb. The in-
teresting case has been recorded by E. Bloch (*Wiener Klinische Woche-
schrift*, 1907, p. 1649) of a lady who had the feeling of a ball rising
from her stomach to her throat, and then sinking. This feeling was as-
associated with thoughts of her husband's rising and falling penis, and
was always most liable to occur when she wished for coitus.
though without a clear distinction between hysteria and epilepsy.\(^1\) If we turn to the best Roman physicians we find again that Arctæus, "the Esquiro of antiquity," has set forth the same view, adding to his description of the movements of the womb in hysteria: "It delights, also, in fragrant smells, and advances toward them; and it has an aversion to fœtid smells, and flies from them; and, on the whole, the womb is like an animal within an animal."\(^2\) Consequently, the treatment was by applying fœtid smells to the nose and rubbing fragrant ointments around the sexual parts.\(^3\)

The Arab physicians, who carried on the traditions of Greek medicine, appear to have said nothing new about hysteria, and possibly had little knowledge of it. In Christian mediæval Europe, also, nothing new was added to the theory of hysteria; it was, indeed, less known medically than it had ever been, and, in part it may be as a result of this ignorance, in part as a result of general wretchedness (the hysterical phenomena of witchcraft reaching their height, Michelet points out, in the fourteenth century, which was a period of special misery for the poor), it flourished more vigorously. Not alone have we the records of nervous epidemics, but illuminated manuscripts, ivories, miniatures, bas-reliefs, frescoes, and engravings furnish the most vivid iconographic evidence of the prevalence of hysteria in its most violent forms during the Middle Ages. Much of this evidence is

\(^1\) As Gilles de la Tourette points out, it is not difficult to show that epilepsy, the morbus sacer of the ancients, owed much of its sacred character to this confusion with hysteria. Those priestesses who, struck by the morbus sacer, gave forth their oracles amid convulsions, were certainly not the victims of epilepsy, but of hysteria (Traité de l'Hystérie, vol. i, p. 3).

\(^2\) Arctæus, On the Causes and Symptoms of Acute Diseases, Book ii, Chapter 11.

\(^3\) It may be noted that this treatment furnishes another instance of the continuity of therapeutic methods, through all changes of theory, from the earliest to the latest times. Drugs of unpleasant odor, like asafetida, have always been used in hysteria, and scientific medicine to-day still finds that asafetida is a powerful sedative to the uterus, controlling nervous conditions during pregnancy and arresting uterine irritation when abortion is threatened (see, e.g., Warman, Der Frauenarzt, August, 1895). Again, the rubbing of fragrant ointments into the sexual regions is but a form of that massage which is one of the modern methods of treating the sexual disorders of women.
brought to the service of science in the fascinating works of Dr. P. Richer, one of Charcot's pupils.\(^1\)

In the seventeenth century Ambroise Paré was still talking, like Hippocrates, about "suffocation of the womb"; Forestus was still, like Arelius, applying friction to the vulva; Fernel was still reproaching Galen, who had denied that the movements of the womb produced hysteria.

It was in the seventeenth century (1618) that a French physician, Charles Lepois (Carolus Piso), physician to Henry II, trusting, as he said, to experience and reason, overthrew at one stroke the doctrine of hysteria that had ruled almost unquestioned for two thousand years, and showed that the malady occurred at all ages and in both sexes, that its seat was not in the womb, but in the brain, and that it must be considered a nervous disease.\(^2\) So revolutionary a doctrine could not fail to meet with violent opposition, but it was confirmed by Willis, and in 1681, we owe to the genius of Sydenham a picture of hysteria which for lucidity, precision, and comprehensiveness has only been excelled in our own times.

It was not possible any longer to maintain the womb theory of Hippocrates in its crude form, but in modified forms, and especially with the object of preserving the connection which many observers continued to find between hysteria and the sexual emotions, it still found supporters in the eighteenth and even the nineteenth centuries. James, in the middle of the eighteenth century, returned to the classical view, and in his *Dictionary of Medicine* maintained that the womb is the seat of hysteria. Léouyer Villermay in 1816 asserted that the most frequent causes of hysteria are deprivation of the pleasures of love, griefs connected with this passion, and disorders of menstruation. Foville in 1833 and Landouzy in 1846 advocated somewhat similar views. The acute Laycock in 1840 quoted as "almost a medical proverb"

\(^1\) *Les Démoniaques dans l'Art*, 1887; *Les Malades et les Difformes dans l'Art*, 1889.

\(^2\) Glafira Abricosoff, of Moscow, in her Paris thesis, *L'Hystérie aux xviie et xviiiie siècles*, 1897, presents a summary of the various views held at this time; as also Gilles de la Tourette, *Traité de l'Hystérie*, vol. i, Chapter I.
the saying, "Salacitas major, major ad hystericam proclivitas," fully indorsing it. More recently still Clouston has defined hysteria as "the loss of the inhibitory influence exercised on the reproductive and sexual instincts of women by the higher mental and moral functions" (a position evidently requiring some modification in view of the fact that hysteria is by no means confined to women), while the same authority remarks that more or less concealed sexual phenomena are the chief symptoms of "hysterical insanity."\(^1\) Two gynæcologists of high position in different parts of the world, Hegar in Germany and Balls-Headley in Australia, attribute hysteria, as well as anaemia, largely to unsatisfied sexual desire, including the non-satisfaction of the "ideal feelings."\(^2\) Lombroso and Ferrero, again, while admitting that the sexual feelings might be either heightened or depressed in hysteria, referred to the frequency of what they termed "a paradoxical sexual instinct" in the hysterical, by which, for instance, sexual frigidity is combined with intense sexual preoccupations; and they also pointed out the significant fact that the crimes of the hysterical nearly always revolve around the sexual sphere.\(^3\) Thus, even up to the time when the conception of hysteria which absolutely ignored and excluded any sexual relationship whatever had reached its height, independent views favoring such a relationship still found expression.

Of recent years, however, such views usually aroused violent antagonism. The main current of opinion was with Briquet (1859), who, treating the matter with considerable ability and a wide induction of facts, indignantly repelled the idea that there is any connection between hysteria and the sexual facts of life, physical or psychic. As he himself admitted, Briquet was moved to deny a sexual causation of hysteria by the thought that such

---

1 _Edinburgh Medical Journal_, June, 1883, p. 1123, and _Mental Diseases_, 1887, p. 488.

2 Hegar, _Zusammenhang der Geschlechtskrankheiten mit nervösen Leiden_, Stuttgart, 1885. (Hegar, however, went much further than this, and was largely responsible for the surgical treatment of hysteria now generally recognized as worse than futile.) Balls-Headley, "Etiology of Nervous Diseases of the Female Genital Organs," Allbutt and Playfair, _System of Gynecology_, 1896, p. 141.

3 Lombroso and Ferrero, _La Donna Delinquente_, 1893, pp. 613-14.
an origin would be degrading for women ("a quelque chose de dégradant pour les femmes").

It was, however, the genius of Charcot, and the influence of his able pupils, which finally secured the overthrow of the sexual theory of hysteria. Charcot emphatically anathematized the visceral origin of hysteria; he declared that it is a psychic disorder, and to leave no loop-hole of escape for those who maintained a sexual causation he asserted that there are no varieties of hysteria, that the disease is one and indivisible. Charcot recognized no primordial cause of hysteria beyond heredity, which here plays a more important part than in any other neuropathic condition. Such heredity is either direct or more occasionally by transformation, any deviation of nutrition found in the ancestors (gout, diabetes, arthritis) being a possible cause of hysteria in the descendants. "We do not know anything about the nature of hysteria," Charcot wrote in 1892; "we must make it objective in order to recognize it. The dominant idea for us in the etiology of hysteria is, in the widest sense, its hereditary predisposition. The greater number of those suffering from this affection are simply born hystérisables, and on them the occasional causes act directly, either through autosuggestion or by causing derangement of general nutrition, and more particularly of the nutrition of the nervous system."¹ These views were ably and decisively stated in Gilles de la Tourette's Traité de l'Hystérie, written under the inspiration of Charcot.

While Charcot's doctrine was thus being affirmed and generally accepted, there were at the same time workers in these fields who, though they by no means ignored this doctrine of hysteria or even rejected it, were inclined to think that it was too absolutely stated. Writing in the Dictionary of Psychological Medicine at the same time as Charcot, Donkin, while deprecating any exclusive emphasis on the sexual causation, pointed out the enormous part played by the emotions in the production of hysteria, and the great influence of puberty in women due to the greater extent of the sexual organs, and the

consequently large area of central innervation involved, and thus rendered liable to fall into a state of unstable equilibrium. Enforced abstinence from the gratification of any of the inherent and primitive desires, he pointed out, may be an adequate exciting cause. Such a view as this indicated that to set aside the ancient doctrine of a physical sexual cause of hysteria was by no means to exclude a psychic sexual cause. Ten years earlier Axenfeld and Huchard had pointed out that the reaction against the sexual origin of hysteria was becoming excessive, and they referred to the evidence brought forward by veterinary surgeons showing that unsatisfied sexual desire in animals may produce nervous symptoms very similar to hysteria.\(^1\) The present writer, when in 1894 briefly discussing hysteria as an element in secondary sexual characterization, ventured to reflect the view, confirmed by his own observation, that there was a tendency to unduly minimize the sexual factor in hysteria, and further pointed out that the old error of a special connection between hysteria and the female sexual organs, probably arose from the fact that in woman the organic sexual sphere is larger than in man.\(^2\)

When, indeed, we analyze the foundation of the once predominant opinions of Charcot and his school regarding the sexual relationships of hysteria, it becomes clear that many fallacies and misunderstandings were involved. Briquet, Charcot's chief predecessor, acknowledged that his own view was that a sexual origin of hysteria would be "degrading to women"; that is to say, he admitted that he was influenced by a foolish and improper prejudice, for the belief that the unconscious and involuntary morbid reaction of the nervous system to any disturbance of a great

1 Axenfeld and Huchard, Traité des Névroses, 1883, pp. 1092-94. Icard (La Femme pendant la Période Menstruelle, pp. 120-21) has also referred to recorded cases of hysteria in animals (Coste's and Peter's cases), as has Gilles de la Tourette (op. cit., vol. i, p. 123). See also, for references, Féré, L'Instinct Sexuel, p. 59.

2 Man and Woman, 4th ed., p. 326. A distinguished gynecologist, Matthews Duncan, had remarked some years earlier (Lancet, May 18, 1889) that hysteria, though not a womb disease, "especially attaches itself to the generative system, because the genital system, more than any other, exerts emotional power over the individual, power also in morals, power in social questions."
primary instinct can have "quelque chose de dégradant" is itself an immoral belief; such disturbance of the nervous system might or might not be caused, but in any case the alleged "degradation" could only be the fiction of a distorted imagination. Again, confusion had been caused by the ancient error of making the physical sexual organs responsible for hysteria, first the womb, more recently the ovaries; the outcome of this belief was the extirpation of the sexual organs for the cure of hysteria. Charcot condemned absolutely all such operations as unscientific and dangerous, declaring that there is no such thing as hysteria of menstrual origin.\(^1\) Subsequently, Angelucci and Pierracini carried out an international inquiry into the results of the surgical treatment of hysteria, and condemned it in the most unqualified manner.\(^2\) It is clearly demonstrated that the physical sexual organs are not the seat of hysteria. It does not, however, follow that even physical sexual desire, when repressed, is not a cause of hysteria. The opinion that it was so formed an essential part of the early doctrine of hysteria, and was embodied in the ancient maxim: "Nubat illa et morbus effugiet." The womb, it seemed to the ancients, was crying out for satisfaction, and when that was received the disease vanished.\(^3\) But when it became clear that sexual desire, though ultimately founded on the sexual apparatus, is a nervous and psychic fact, to put the sexual organs out of count was not sufficient; for the sexual emotions may exist before puberty, and persist after complete removal of the sexual organs. Thus it has been the object of many writers to repel the idea that unsatisfied sexual desire can be a cause of hysteria. Briquet pointed out that hysteria is rare among nuns and frequent among prostitutes. Krafft-Ebing

---

\(^1\) Gilles de la Tourette, Archives de Tocologie et de Gynécologie, June, 1895.

\(^2\) Rivista Sperimentale di Freniatria, 1897, p. 290; summarized in the Journal of Mental Science, January, 1898.

\(^3\) From the earliest times it was held that menstruation favors hysteria; more recently, Landouzy recorded a number of observations showing that hysterical attacks coincide with perfectly healthy menstruation; while Ball has maintained that it is only during menstruation that hysteria appears in its true color. See the opinions collected by Icard, La Femme pendant la Période Menstruelle, pp. 75-81.
believed that most hysterical women are not anxious for sexual satisfaction, and declared that "hysteria caused through the nonsatisfaction of the coarse sensual sexual impulse I have never seen," while Pitres and others refer to the frequently painful nature of sexual hallucinations in the hysterical. But it soon becomes obvious that the psychic sexual sphere is not confined to the gratification of conscious physical sexual desire. It is not true that hysteria is rare among nuns, some of the most tremendous epidemics of hysteria, and the most carefully studied, having occurred in convents, while the hysterical phenomena sometimes associated with revivals are well known. The supposed prevalence among prostitutes would not be evidence against the sexual relationships of hysteria; it has, however, been denied, even by so great an authority as Parent-Duchâtelet who found it very rare, even in prostitutes in hospitals, when it was often associated with masturbation; in prostitutes, however, who returned to a respectable life, giving up their old habits, he found hysteria common and severe. The frequent absence of physical sexual feeling, again, may quite reasonably be taken as evidence of a disorder of the sexual emotions, while the undoubted fact that sexual intercourse usually has little beneficial effect on pronounced hysteria, and that sexual excitement during sleep and

1 Kraft-Ebing, "Über Neurosen und Psychosen durch sexuelle Abstinenz," Jahrbücher für Psychiatrie, vol. iii, 1888. It must, however, be added that the relief of hysteria by sexual satisfaction is not rare, and that Rosenthal finds that the convulsions are thus diminished. (Allgemeine Wiener Medizin-Zeitung, Nos. 46 and 47, 1887.) So they are also, in simple and uncomplicated cases, according to Mongeri, by pregnancy.

2 "All doctors who have patients in convents," remarks Marro (La Pubertà, p. 338), "know how hysteria dominates among them;" he adds that his own experience confirms that of Raciborski, who found that nuns devoted to the contemplative life are more liable to hysteria than those who are occupied in teaching or in nursing. It must be added, however, that there is not unanimity as to the prevalence of hysteria in convents. Brachet was of the same opinion as Briquet, and so considered it rare. Imbert-Goubeyre, also (La Stigmatisation, p. 436) states that during more than forty years of medical life, though he has been connected with a number of religious communities, he has not found in them a single hysterical subject, the reason being, he remarks, that the unbalanced and extravagant are refused admission to the cloister.

sexual hallucinations are often painful in the same condition, is far from showing that injury or repression of the sexual emotions had nothing to do with the production of the hysteria. It would be as reasonable to argue that the evil effect of a heavy meal on a starving man must be taken as evidence that he was not suffering from starvation. The fact, indeed, on which Gilles de la Tourette and others have remarked, that the hysterical often desire not so much sexual intercourse as simple affection, would tend to show that there is here a real analogy, and that starvation or lesion of the sexual emotions may produce, like bodily starvation, a rejection of those satisfactions which are demanded in health. Thus, even a mainly a priori examination of the matter may lead us to see that many arguments brought forward in favor of Charcot's position on this point fall to the ground when we realize that the sexual emotions may constitute a highly complex sphere, often hidden from observation, sometimes not conscious at all, and liable to many lesions besides that due to the non-satisfaction of sexual desire. At the same time we are not thus enabled to overthrow any of the positive results attained by Charcot and his school.

It may, however, be pointed out that Charcot's attitude toward hysteria was the outcome of his own temperament. He was primarily a neurologist, the bent of his genius was toward the investigation of facts that could be objectively demonstrated. His first interest in hysteria, dating from as far back as 1862, was in hystero-epileptic convulsive attacks, and to the last he remained indifferent to all facts which could not be objectively demonstrated. That was the secret of the advances he was enabled to make in neurology. For purely psychological investigation he had no liking, and probably no aptitude. Anyone who was privileged to observe his methods of work at the Salpêtrière will easily recall the great master's towering figure; the disdainful expression, sometimes, even, it seemed, a little sour; the lofty bearing which enthusiastic admirers called Napoleonic. The questions addressed to the patient were cold, distant, sometimes impatient. Charcot clearly had little faith in the value of any results so attained. One may well believe, also, that a man whose
superficial personality was so haughty and awe-inspiring to strangers would, in any case, have had the greatest difficulty in penetrating the mysteries of a psychic world so obscure and elusive as that presented by the hysterical.¹

The way was thus opened for further investigations on the psychic side. Charcot had affirmed the power, not only of physical traumatism, but even of psychic lesions—of moral shocks—to provoke its manifestations, but his sole contribution to the psychology of this psychic malady,—and this was borrowed from the Nancy school,—lay in the one word "suggestibility"; the nature and mechanism of this psychic process he left wholly unexplained. This step has been taken by others, in part by Janet, who, from 1889 onward, has not only insisted that the emotions stand in the first line among the causes of hysteria, but has also pointed out some portion of the mechanism of this process; thus, he saw the significance of the fact, already recognized, that strong emotions tend to produce anaesthesia and to lead to a condition of mental disaggregation, favorable to abulia, or abolition of will-power. It remained to show in detail the mechanism by which the most potent of all the emotions affects its influence, and, by attempting to do this, the Viennese investigators, Breuer and especially Freud, have greatly aided the study of hysteria.² They have not, it is important to remark, overturned the positive elements in their great forerunner's work. Freud began as a disciple of Charcot, and he himself remarks that, in his earlier investigations of hysteria, he had no thought

¹ It may not be unnecessary to point out that here and throughout, in speaking of the psychic mechanism of hysteria, I do not admit that any process can be purely psychic. As Féré puts it in an admirable study of hysteria (Twentieth Century Practice of Medicine, 1897, vol. x, p. 556): "In the genesis of hysterical troubles everything takes place as if the psychical and the somatic phenomena were two aspects of the same biological fact."

² Pierre Janet, L'Automatisme Psychologique, 1889; L'Etat mental des Hystériques, 1894; Névroses et Idées fixes, 1898; Breuer und Freud, Studien über Hysterie, Vienna, 1895; the best introduction to Freud's work is, however, to be found in the two series of his Sammlung Kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre, published in a collected form in 1906 and 1909. It may be added that a useful selection of Freud's papers has lately (1909) been published in English.
of finding any sexual etiology for that malady; he would have regarded any such suggestion as an insult to his patient. The results reached by these workers were the outcome of long and detailed investigation. Freud has investigated many cases of hysteria in minute detail, often devoting to a single case over a hundred hours of work. The patients, unlike those on whom the results of the French school have been mainly founded, all belonged to the educated classes, and it was thus possible to carry out an elaborate psychic investigation which would be impossible among the uneducated. Breuer and Freud insist on the fine qualities of mind and character frequently found among the hysterical. They cannot accept suggestibility as an invariable characteristic of hysteria, only abnormal excitability; they are far from agreeing with Janet (although on many points at one with him), that psychic weakness marks hysteria; there is merely an appearance of mental weakness, they say, because the mental activity of the hysterical is split up, and only a part of it is conscious.\footnote{We might, perhaps, even say that in hysteria the so-called higher centres have an abnormally strong inhibitory influence over the lower centres. Gioffredi (Gazzetta degli Ospedali, October 1, 1895) has shown that some hysterical symptoms, such as mutism, can be cured by etherization, thus loosening the control of the higher centres.} The superiority of character of the hysterical is indicated by the fact that the conflict between their ideas of right and the bent of their inclinations is often an element in the constitution of the hysterical state. Breuer and Freud are prepared to assert that the hysterical are among “the flower of humanity,” and they refer to those qualities of combined imaginative genius and practical energy which characterized St. Theresa, “the patron saint of the hysterical.”

To understand the position of Breuer and Freud we may start from the phenomenon of “nervous shock” produced by physical traumatism, often of a very slight character. Charcot had shown that such “nervous shock,” with the chain of resulting symptoms, is nothing more or less than hysteria. Breuer and Freud may be linked on to Charcot at this point. They began by regarding the most typical hysteria as really a \textit{psychic traumatism}; that is to say, that it starts in a lesion, or rather in
repeated lesions, of the emotional organism. It is true that the school of Charcot admitted the influence of moral shock, especially of the emotion of fear, but that merely as an "agent provocateur," and with a curious perversity Gilles de la Tourette, certainly reflecting the attitude of Charcot, in his elaborate treatise on hysteria fails to refer to the sphere of the sexual emotions even when enumerating the "agents provocateurs."  

The influence of fear is not denied by Breuer and Freud, but they have found that careful psychic analysis frequently shows that the shock of a commonplace "fear" is really rooted in a lesion of the sexual emotions. A typical and very simple illustration is furnished in a case, recorded by Breuer, in which a young girl of seventeen had her first hysterical attack after a cat sprang on her shoulders as she was going downstairs. Careful investigation showed that this girl had been the object of somewhat ardent attentions from a young man whose advances she had resisted, although her own sexual emotions had been aroused. A few days before, she had been surprised by this young man on these same dark stairs, and had forcibly escaped from his hands. Here was the real psychic traumatism, the operation of which merely became manifest in the cat. "But in how many cases," asks Breuer, "is a cat thus reckoned as a completely sufficient causa efficiens?"

In every case that they have investigated Breuer and Freud have found some similar secret lesion of the psychic sexual sphere. In one case a governess, whose training has been severely upright, is, in spite of herself and without any encouragement, led to experience for the father of the children under her care an affection which she refuses to acknowledge even to herself; in another, a young woman finds herself falling in love with her brother-in-law; again, an innocent girl suddenly discovers

---

1 Charcot's school could not fail to recognize the erotic tone which often dominates hysterical hallucinations. Gilles de la Tourette seeks to minimize it by the remark that "it is more mental than real." He means to say that it is more psychic than physical, but he implies that the physical element in sex is alone "real," a strange assumption in any case, as well as destructive of Gilles de la Tourette's own fundamental assertion that hysteria is a real disease and yet purely psychic.
her uncle in the act of sexual intercourse with her playmate, and a boy on his way home from school is subjected to the coarse advances of a sexual invert. In nearly every case, as Freud eventually found reason to believe, a primary lesion of the sexual emotions dates from the period of puberty and frequently of childhood, and in nearly every case the intimately private nature of the lesion causes it to be carefully hidden from everyone, and even to be unacknowledged by the subject of it. In the earlier cases Breuer and Freud found that a slight degree of hypnosis is necessary to bring the lesion into consciousness, and the accuracy of the revelations thus obtained has been tested by independent witness. Freud has, however, long abandoned the induction of any degree of hypnosis; he simply tries to arrange that the patient shall feel absolutely free to tell her own story, and so proceeds from the surface downwards, slowly finding and piecing together such essential fragments of the history as may be recovered, in the same way he remarks, as the archaeologist excavates below the surface and recovers and puts together the fragments of an antique statue. Much of the material found, however, has only a symbolic value requiring interpretation and is sometimes pure fantasy. Freud now attaches great importance to dreams as symbolically representing much in the subject's mental history which is otherwise difficult to reach.¹ The subtle and slender clues which Freud frequently follows in interpreting dreams cannot fail sometimes to arouse doubt in his readers' minds, but he certainly seems to have been often successful in thus reaching latent facts in consciousness. The primary lesion may thus act as "a foreign body in consciousness." Something is introduced into psychic life which refuses to merge in the general flow of consciousness. It cannot be accepted simply as other facts of life are accepted; it cannot even be talked about, and so submitted to the slow usure by which our experiences are worn down and gradually transformed. Breuer illustrates what happens by reference to the sneezing reflex. "When an irritation to the nasal mucous membrane for some reason fails to liberate

¹See, e.g., his substantial volume, Die Traumdeutung, 1900, 2d ed. 1909.
this reflex, a feeling of excitement and tension arises. This excitement, being unable to stream out along motor channels, now spreads itself over the brain, inhibiting other activities. . . . In the highest spheres of human activity we may watch the same process." It is a result of this process that, as Breuer and Freud found, the mere act of confession may greatly relieve the hysterical symptoms produced by this psychic mechanism, and in some cases may wholly and permanently remove them. It is on this fact that they founded their method of treatment, devised by Breuer and by him termed the cathartic method, though Freud prefers to call it the "analytic" method. It is, as Freud points out, the reverse of the hypnotic method of suggestive treatment; there is the same difference, Freud remarks, between the two methods as Leonardo da Vinci found for the two technical methods of art, *per via di porre* and *per via di levare*; the hypnotic method, like painting, works by putting in, the cathartic or analytic method, like sculpture, works by taking out.\(^1\)

It is part of the mechanism of this process, as understood by these authors, that the physical symptoms of hysteria are constituted, by a process of conversion, out of the injured emotions, which then sink into the background or altogether out of consciousness. Thus, they found the prolonged tension of nursing a near and dear relative to be a very frequent factor in the production of hysteria. For instance, an originally rheumatic pain experienced by a daughter when nursing her father becomes the symbol in memory of her painful psychic excitement, and this perhaps for several reasons, but chiefly because *its presence in consciousness almost exactly coincided with that excitement*. In another way, again, nausea and vomiting may become a symbol through the profound sense of disgust with which some emotional shock was associated. Then the symbol begins to have a life of its own, and draws hidden strength from the emotion with which it is correlated. Breuer and Freud have found by careful investigation that the pains and physical troubles of hysteria are far from being capricious, but may be traced in a varying manner

\(^1\) *Sammlung*, first series, p. 208.
to an origin in some incident, some pain, some action, which was
associated with a moment of acute psychic agony. The process
of conversion was an involuntary escape from an intolerable emo-
tion, comparable to the physical pain sometimes sought in intense
mental grief, and the patient wins some relief from the tortured
emotions, though at the cost of psychic abnormality, of a more
or less divided state of consciousness and of physical pain, or else
anesthesia. In Charcot’s third stage of the hysterical convulsion,
that of “attitudes passionnelles,” Breuer and Freud see the hallu-
cinatory reproduction of a recollection which is full of signifi-
cance for the origin of the hysterical manifestations.

The final result reached by these workers is clearly stated by
each writer. “The main observation of our predecessors,” states
Breuer,1 “still preserved in the word ‘hysteria,’ is nearer to the
truth than the more recent view which puts sexuality almost in
the last line, with the object of protecting the patient from moral
reproaches. Certainly the sexual needs of the hysterical are just
as individual and as various in force as those of the healthy. But
they suffer from them, and in large measure, indeed, they suffer
precisely through the struggle with them, through the effort to
thrust sexuality aside.” “The weightiest fact,” concludes Freud,2
“on which we strike in a thorough pursuit of the analysis is this:
From whatever side and from whatever symptoms we start, we
always unfailingly reach the region of the sexual life. Here, first
of all, an etiological condition of hysterical states is revealed.

At the bottom of every case of hysteria—and repro-
ducible by an analytical effort after even an interval of long
years—may be found one or more facts of precocious sexual
experience belonging to earliest youth. I regard this as an
important result, as the discovery of a caput Nili of neuropath-
ology.” Ten years later, enlarging rather than restricting his
conception, Freud remarks: “Sexuality is not a mere deus ex
machina which intervenes but once in the hysterical process; it
is the motive force of every separate symptom and every expres-
sion of a symptom. The morbid phenomena constitute, to speak

1 Studien über Hysterie, p. 217.
2 Sammlung, first series, p. 162.
plainly, the patient's sexual activity."\(^1\) The actual hysterical fit, Freud now states, may be regarded as "the substitute for a once practiced and then abandoned *auto-erotic* satisfaction," and similarly it may be regarded as an equivalent of coitus.\(^2\)

It is natural to ask how this conception affects that elaborate picture of hysteria laboriously achieved by Charcot and his school. It cannot be said that it abolishes any of the positive results reached by Charcot, but it certainly alters their significance and value; it presents them in a new light and changes the whole perspective. With his passion for getting at tangible definite physical facts, Charcot was on very safe ground. But he was content to neglect the psychic analysis of hysteria, while yet proclaiming that hysteria is a purely psychic disorder. He had no cause of hysteria to present save only heredity. Freud certainly admits heredity, but, as he points out, the part it plays has been overrated. It is too vague and general to carry us far, and when a specific and definite cause can be found, the part played by heredity recedes to become merely a condition, the soil on which the "specific etiology" works. Here probably Freud's enthusiasm at first carried him too far and the most important modification he has made in his views occurs at this point: he now attaches a preponderant influence to heredity. He has realized that sexual activity in one form or another is far too common in childhood to make it possible to lay very great emphasis on "traumatic lesions" of this character, and he has also realized that an outcrop of fantasies may somewhat later develop on these childish activities, intervening between them and the subsequent morbid symptoms. He is thus led to emphasize anew the significance of heredity, not, however, in Charcot's sense, as general neuropathic disposition but as "sexual constitution." The significance of "infantile sexual lesions" has also tended to give place to that of "infantilism of sexuality."\(^3\)

The real merit of Freud's subtle investigations is that

---

\(^1\) *Sammlung*, second series, p. 102.


\(^3\) *Sammlung*, first series, p. 229. Freud has developed his conception of sexual constitution in *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*, 1905.
—while possibly furnishing a justification of the imperfectly-understood idea that had floated in the mind of observers ever since the name "hysteria" was first invented—he has certainly supplied a definite psychic explanation of a psychic malady. He has succeeded in presenting clearly, at the expense of much labor, insight, and sympathy, a dynamic view of the psychic processes involved in the constitution of the hysterical state, and such a view seems to show that the physical symptoms laboriously brought to light by Charcot are largely but epiphenomena and by-products of an emotional process, often of tragic significance to the subject, which is taking place in the most sensitive recess of the psychic organism. That the picture of the mechanism involved, presented to us by Professor Freud, cannot be regarded as a final and complete account of the matter, may readily be admitted. It has developed in Freud's own hands, and some of the developments will require very considerable confirmation before they can be accepted as generally true.  

But these investigations have at least served to open the door, which Charcot had inconsistently held closed, into the deeper mysteries of hysteria, and have shown that here, if anywhere, further research will be profitable. They have also served to show that hysteria may be definitely regarded as, in very many cases at least, a manifestation of the sexual emotions and their lesions; in other words, a transformation of auto-eroticism.

The conception of hysteria so vigorously enforced by Charcot and his school is thus now beginning to appear incomplete. But we have to recognize that that incompleteness was right and necessary. A strong reaction was needed against a widespread view of hysteria that was in large measure scientifically false. It was necessary to show clearly that hysteria is a definite disorder, even when the sexual organs and emotions are swept wholly out of consideration; and it was also necessary to show that the lying and dissimulation so widely attributed to the hysterical

---

1 As Moll remarks, Freud's conceptions are still somewhat subjective, and in need of objective demonstration; but whatever may be thought of their theories, he adds, there can be no doubt that Breuer and Freud have done a great service by calling attention to the important action of the sexual life on the nervous system.
were merely the result of an ignorant and unscientific misinterpretation of psychic elements of the disease. This was finally and triumphantly achieved by Charcot's school.

There is only one other point in the explanation of hysteria which I will here refer to, and that because it is usually ignored, and because it has relationship to the general psychology of the sexual emotions. I refer to that physiological hysteria which is the normal counterpart of the pathological hysteria which has been described in its physical details by Charcot, and to which alone the term should strictly be applied. Even though hysteria as a disease may be described as one and indivisible, there are yet to be found, among the ordinary and fairly healthy population, vague and diffused hysteroid symptoms which are dissipated in a healthy environment, or pass nearly unnoted, only to develop in a small proportion of cases, under the influence of a more pronounced heredity, or a severe physical or psychic lesion, into that definite morbid state which is properly called hysteria.

This diffused hysteroid condition may be illustrated by the results of a psychological investigation carried on in America by Miss Gertrude Stein among the ordinary male and female students of Harvard University and Radcliffe College. The object of the investigation was to study, with the aid of a planchette, the varying liability to automatic movements among normal individuals. Nearly one hundred students were submitted to experiment. It was found that automatic responses could be obtained in two sittings from all but a small proportion of the students of both sexes, but that there were two types of individual who showed a special aptitude. One type (probably showing the embryonic form of neurasthenia) was a nervous, high-strung, imaginative type, not easily influenced from without, and not so much suggestible as autosuggestible. The other type, which is significant from our present point of view, is thus described by Miss Stein: "In general the individuals, often blonde and pale, are distinctly phlegmatic. If emotional, decidedly of the weakest, sentimental order. They may be either large, healthy, rather heavy, and lacking in vigor or they may be what we call anæmic and phlegmatic. Their power of concen-
trated attention is very small. They describe themselves as never being held by their work; they say that their minds wander easily; that they work on after they are tired, and just keep pegging away. They are very apt to have premonitory conversations, they anticipate the words of their friends, they imagine whole conversations that afterward come true. The feeling of having been there is very common with them; that is, they feel under given circumstances that they have had that identical experience before in all its details. They are often fatalistic in their ideas. They indulge in day-dreams. As a rule, they are highly suggestible.”

There we have a picture of the physical constitution and psychic temperament on which the classical symptoms of hysteria might easily be built up. But these persons were ordinary students, and while a few of their characteristics are what is commonly and vaguely called “morbid,” on the whole they must be regarded as ordinarilgy healthy individuals. They have the congenital constitution and predisposition on which some severe psychic lesion at the “psychological moment” might develop the most definite and obstinate symptoms of hysteria, but under favorable circumstances they will be ordinary men and women, of no more than ordinary abnormality or ordinary power. They are among the many who have been called to hysteria at birth; they may never be among the few who are chosen.

We may have to recognize that on the side of the sexual emotions, as well as in general constitution, a condition may be traced among normal persons that is hysteroid in character, and serves as the healthy counterpart of a condition which in hys-


2 Charcot’s most faithful followers refuse to recognize a “hysteric temperament,” and are quite right, if such a conception is used to destroy the conception of hysteria as a definite disease. We cannot, however, fail to recognize a diathesis which, while still apparently healthy, is predisposed to hysteria. So distinguished a disciple of Charcot as Janet thoroughly recognizes this, and argues (L’Etat mental, etc., p. 298) that “we may find in the habits, the passions, the psychic automatism of the normal man, the germ of all hysterical phenomena.” Féré held a somewhat similar view.
teria is morbid. In women such a condition has been traced (though misnamed) by Dr. King.¹

Dr. King describes what he calls "sexual hysteria in women," which he considers a chief variety of hysteria. He adds, however, that it is not strictly a disease, but simply an automatic reaction of the reproductive system, which tends to become abnormal under conditions of civilization, and to be perpetuated in a morbid form. In this condition he finds twelve characters: 1. Time of life, usually between puberty and climacteric. 2. Attacks rarely occur when subject is alone. 3. Subject appears unconscious, but is not really so. 4. She is instinctively ashamed afterward. 5. It occurs usually in single women, or in those, single or married, whose sexual needs are unsatisfied. 6. No external evidence of disease, and (as Aitken pointed out) the nates are not flattened; the woman's physical condition is not impaired, and she may be specially attractive to men. 7. Warmth of climate and the season of spring and summer are conducive to the condition. 8. The paroxysm is short and temporary. 9. While light touches are painful, firm pressure and rough handling give relief. 10. It may occur in the occupied, but an idle, purposeless life is conducive. 11. The subject delights in exciting sympathy and in being fondled and caressed. 12. There is defect of will and a strong stimulus is required to lead to action.

Among civilized women, the author proceeds, this condition does not appear to subserve any useful purpose. "Let us, however, go back to aboriginal woman—to woman of the woods and the fields. Let us picture ourselves a young aboriginal Venus in one of her earliest hysterical paroxysms. In doing so, let us not forget some of the twelve characteristics previously mentioned. She will not be 'acting her part' alone, or, if alone, it will be in a place where someone else is likely soon to discover her. Let this Venus be now discovered by a youthful Apollo of the woods, a man with fully developed animal instincts. He and she, like any other animals, are in the free field of Nature. He cannot but observe to himself: 'This woman is not dead; she breathes and is warm; she does not look ill; she is plump and rosy.' He speaks to her; she neither hears (apparently) nor responds. Her eyes are closed. He touches, moves, and handles her at his pleasure. She makes no resistance. What will this primitive Apollo do next? He will cure the fit, and bring the woman back to consciousness, satisfy her emotions, and restore her volition—not by delicate touches that might be 'agonizing' to her hyperesthetic skin, but by vigorous massage, passive motions, and succussion that would be painless. The emotional process on the

part of the woman would end, perhaps, with mingled laughter, tears, and shame; and when accused afterward of the part which the ances-
trally acquired properties of her nervous system had compelled her to act, as a preliminary to the event, what woman would not deny it and be angry? But the course of Nature having been followed, the natural purpose of the hysterical paroxysm accomplished, there would remain as a result of the treatment—instead of one discontented woman—two happy people, and the possible beginning of a third."

"Natural. primary sexual hysteria in woman," King concludes, "is a temporary modification of the nervous government of the body and the distribution of nerve-force (occurring for the most part, as we see it to-day, in prudish women of strong moral principle, whose volition has disposed them to resist every sort of liberty or approach from the other sex), consisting in a transient abdication of the general, volitional, and self-preservationial ego, while the reins of government are temporarily assigned to the usurping power of the reproductive ego, so that the reproductive government overrules the government by volition, and thus, as it were, forcibly compels the woman's organism to so dispose itself, at a suitable time and place, as to allow, invite, and secure the approach of the other sex, whether she will or not, to the end that Nature's imperious demand for reproduction shall be obeyed."

This perhaps rather fantastic description is not a presenta-
tion of hysteria in the technical sense, but we may admit that it presents a state which, if not the real physiological counterpart of the hysterical convulsion, is yet distinctly analogous to the latter. The sexual orgasm has this correspondence with the hysterical fit, that they both serve to discharge the nervous centres and relieve emotional tension. It may even happen, especially in the less severe forms of hysteria, that the sexual orgasm takes place during the hysterical fit; this was found by Rosenthal, of Vienna, to be always the case in the semiconscious paroxysms of a young girl whose condition was easily cured;¹ no doubt such cases would be more frequently found if they were sought for. In severe forms of hysteria, however, it frequently happens, as so many observers have noted, that normal sexual excitement has

¹ M. Rosenthal, Diseases of the Nervous System, vol. ii, p. 44. Féré notes similar cases (Twentieth Century Practice of Medicine, vol. x, p. 551). Long previously, Gall had recorded the case of a young widow of ardent temperament who had convulsive attacks, apparently of hysterical nature, which always terminated in sexual orgasm (Fonctions du Cerveau, 1825, vol. iii, p. 245).
ceased to give satisfaction, has become painful, perverted, paradoxical. Freud has enabled us to see how a shock to the sexual emotions, injuring the emotional life at its source, can scarcely fail sometimes to produce such a result. But the necessity for nervous explosion still persists. It may, indeed, persist, even in an abnormally strong degree, in consequence of the inhibition of normal activities generally. The convulsive fit is the only form of relief open to the tension. "A lady whom I long attended," remarks Ashwell, "always rejoiced when the fit was over, since it relieved her system generally, and especially her brain, from painful irritation which had existed for several previous days." That the fit mostly fails to give real satisfaction, and that it fails to cure the disease, is due to the fact that it is a morbid form of relief. The same character of hysteria is seen, with more satisfactory results for the most part, in the influence of external nervous shock. It was the misunderstood influence of such shocks in removing hysteria which in former times led to the refusal to regard hysteria as a serious disease. During the Rebellion of 1745-46 in Scotland, Cullen remarks that there was little hysteria. The same was true of the French Revolution and of the Irish Rebellion, while Rush (in a study On the Influence of the American Revolution on the Human Body) observed that many hysterical women were "restored to perfect health by the events of the time." In such cases the emotional tension is given an opportunity of explosion in new and impersonal channels, and the chain of morbid personal emotions is broken.

It has been urged by some that the fact that the sexual organ usually fails to remove the disorder in true hysteria excludes a sexual factor of hysteria. It is really, one may point out, an argument in favor of such an element as one of the factors of hysteria. If there were no initial lesion of the sexual emotions, if the natural healthy sexual channel still remained free for the passage of the emotional overflow, then we should expect that it

1 There seems to be a greater necessity for such explosive manifestations in women than in men, whatever the reason may be. I have brought together some of the evidence pointing in this direction in Man and Woman, 4th ed., revised and enlarged, Chapters xii and xiii.
would much oftener come into play in the removal of hysteria. In the more healthy, merely hysteroid condition, the psychic sexual organism is not injured, and still responds normally, removing the abnormal symptoms when allowed to do so. It is the confusion between this almost natural condition and the truly morbid condition, alone properly called hysteria, which led to the ancient opinion, inaugurated by Plato and Hippocrates, that hysteria may be cured by marriage.\footnote{There is no doubt an element of real truth in this ancient belief, though it mainly holds good of minor cases of hysteria. Many excellent authorities accept it. “Hysteria is certainly common in the single,” Herman remarks \textit{(Diseases of Women}, 1898, p. 33), “and is generally cured by a happy marriage.” Löwenfeld \textit{(Sexualleben und Nervenleiden}, p. 153) says that “it cannot be denied that marriage produces a beneficial change in the general condition of many hysterical patients,” though, he adds, it will not remove the hysterical temperament. The advantage of marriage for the hysterical is not necessarily due, solely or at all, to the exercise of sexual functions. This is pointed out by Mongeri, who observes \textit{(Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatric}, 1901, Heft 5, p. 917): “I have known and treated several hysterical girls who are now married, and do not show the least neuropathic indications. Some of these no longer have any wish for sexual gratification, and even fulfill their marital duties unwillingly, though loving their husbands and living with them in an extremely happy way. In my opinion, marriage is a sovereign remedy for neuropathic women, who need to find a support in another personality, able to share with them the battle of life.”} The difference may be illustrated by the difference between a distended bladder which is still able to contract normally on its contents when at last an opportunity of doing so is afforded and the bladder in which distension has been so prolonged that nervous control had been lost and spontaneous expulsion has become impossible. The first condition corresponds to the constitution, which, while simulating the hysterical condition, is healthy enough to react normally in spite of psychic lesions; the second corresponds to a state in which, owing to the prolonged stress of psychic traumatism,—sexual or not,—a definite condition of hysteria has arisen. The one state is healthy, though abnormal; the other is one of pronounced morbidity.

The condition of true hysteria is thus linked on to almost healthy states, and especially to a condition which may be described as one of sex-hunger. Such a suggestion may help us
to see these puzzling phenomena in their true nature and perspective.

At this point I may refer to the interesting parallel, and probable real relationship, between hysteria and chlorosis. As Luzet has said, hysteria and chlorosis are sisters. We have seen that there is some ground for regarding hysteria as an exaggerated form of a normal process which is really an auto-erotic phenomenon. There is some ground, also, for regarding chlorosis as the exaggeration of a physiological state connected with sexual conditions, more specifically with the preparation for maternity. Hysteria is so frequently associated with anaemic conditions that Biernacki has argued that such conditions really constitute the primary and fundamental cause of hysteria (Neurologisches Centralblatt, March, 1898). And, centuries before Biernacki, Sydenham had stated his belief that poverty of the blood is the chief cause of hysteria.

It would be some confirmation of this position if we could believe that chlorosis, like hysteria, is in some degree a congenital condition. This was the view of Virchow, who regarded chlorosis as essentially dependent on a congenital hypoplasia of the arterial system. Stieda, on the basis of an elaborate study of twenty-three cases, has endeavored to prove that chlorosis is due to a congenital defect of development Zeitschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie, vol. xxxii, Part I, 1895). His facts tend to prove that in chlorosis there are signs of general ill-development, and that, in particular, there is imperfect development of the breasts and sexual organs, with a tendency to contracted pelvis. Charrin, again, regards utero-ovarian inadequacy as at least one of the factors of chlorosis. Chlorosis, in its extreme form, may thus be regarded as a disorder of development, a sign of physical degeneracy. Even if not strictly a cause, a congenital condition may, as Stockman believes (British Medical Journal, December 14, 1895), be a predisposing influence.

However it may be in extreme cases, there is very considerable evidence to indicate that the ordinary anaemia of young women may be due to a storing up of iron in the system, and is so far normal, being a preparation for the function of reproduction. Some observations of Bunge’s seem to throw much light on the real cause of what may be termed physiological chlorosis. He found by a series of experiments on animals of different ages that young animals contain a much greater amount of iron in their tissues than adult animals; that, for instance, the body of a rabbit an hour after birth contains more than four times as much iron as that of a rabbit two and a half months old. It thus appears probable that at the period of puberty, and later, there is a storage of iron in the system preparatory to the exercise of the maternal
functions. It is precisely between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three, as Stockman found by an analysis of his own cases (British Medical Journal, December 14, 1895), that the majority of cases occur; there was, indeed, he found, no case in which the first onset was later than the age of twenty-three. A similar result is revealed by the charts of Lloyd Jones, which cover a vastly greater number of cases.

We owe to Lloyd Jones an important contribution to the knowledge of chlorosis in its physiological or normal relationships. He has shown that chlorosis is but the exaggeration of a condition that is normal at puberty (and, in many women, at each menstrual period), and which, there is good reason to believe, even has a favorable influence on fertility. He found that light-complexioned persons are more fertile than the dark-complexioned, and that at the same time the blood of the latter is of less specific gravity, containing less haemoglobin. Lloyd Jones also reached the generalization that girls who have had chlorosis are often remarkably pretty, so that the tendency to chlorosis is associated with all the sexual and reproductive aptitudes that make a woman attractive to a man. His conclusion is that the normal condition of which chlorosis is the extreme and pathological condition, is a preparation for motherhood (E. Lloyd Jones, "Chlorosis: The Special Anæmia of Young Women," 1897; also numerous reports to the British Medical Association, published in the British Medical Journal. There was an interesting discussion of the theories of chlorosis at the Moscow International Medical Congress, in 1898; see proceedings of the congress, volume iii, section v, pp. 224 et seq.).

We may thus, perhaps, understand why it is that hysteria and anæmia are often combined, and why they are both most frequently found in adolescent young women who have yet had no sexual experiences. Chlorosis is a physical phenomenon; hysteria, largely a psychic phenomenon; yet, both alike may, to some extent at least, be regarded as sexual aptitude showing itself in extreme and pathological forms.
III.


The foregoing sketch will serve to show how vast is the field of life—of normal and not merely abnormal life—more or less infused by auto-erotic phenomena. If, however, we proceed to investigate precisely the exact extent, degree, and significance of such phenomena, we are met by many difficulties. We find, indeed, that no attempts have been made to study auto-erotic phenomena, except as regards the group—a somewhat artificial group, as I have already tried to show—collected under the term “masturbation,” while even here such attempts have only been made among abnormal classes of people, or have been conducted in a manner scarcely likely to yield reliable results.¹ Still there is a certain significance in the more careful investigations which have been made to ascertain the precise frequency of masturbation.

Berger, an experienced specialist in nervous diseases, concluded, in his Vorlesungen, that 99 per cent. of young men and

¹ For a bibliography of masturbation, see Rohleder, Die Masturbation, pp. 11-18; also, Arthur MacDonald, Le Criminel Type, pp. 227 et seq.; cf. G. Stanley Hall, Adolescencce, vol. 1, pp. 432 et seq.
women masturbate occasionally, while the hundredth conceals the truth;\textsuperscript{1} and Hermann Cohn appears to accept this statement as generally true in Germany. So high an estimate has, of course, been called in question, and, since it appears to rest on no basis of careful investigation, we need not seriously consider it. It is useless to argue on suppositions; we must cling to our definite evidence, even though it yields figures which are probably below the mark. Rohleder considers that during adolescence at least 95 per cent. of both sexes masturbate, but his figures are not founded on precise investigation.\textsuperscript{2} Julian Marcus, on the basis of his own statistics, concludes that 92 per cent. male individuals have to some extent masturbated in youth. Perhaps, also, weight attaches to the opinion of Dukes, physician to Rugby School, who states that from 90 to 95 per cent. of all boys at boarding school masturbate.\textsuperscript{3} Seerley, of Springfield, Mass., found that of 125 academic students only 8 assured him they had never masturbated; while of 347, who answered his questions, 71 denied that they practiced masturbation, which seems to imply that 79 per cent. admitted that they practiced it.\textsuperscript{4} Brockman, also in America, among 232 theological students, of the average age of 23\textsuperscript{1/2} years and coming from various parts of the United States, found that 132 spontaneously admitted that masturbation was their most serious temptation and all but one of these admitted that he yielded, 69 of them to a considerable extent. This is a proportion of at least 56 per cent., the real proportion being doubtless larger, since no question had been asked as to sexual offenses; 75 practiced masturbation after conversion, and 24 after they had decided to become ministers; only 66 mentioned sexual intercourse as their chief temptation; but altogether sexual temptations outnumbered all others together.\textsuperscript{5} Moraglia, who made inquiry of 200 women of the lower class in Italy,

\textsuperscript{1} Oskar Berger, Archiv für Psychiatrie, Bd. 6, 1876.
\textsuperscript{2} Die Masturbation, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{3} Dukes, Preservation of Health, 1884, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{4} G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, vol. i, p. 434.
\textsuperscript{5} F. S. Brockman, "A Study of the Moral and Religious Life of Students in the United States," Pedagogical Seminary, September, 1902. Many pitiful narratives are reproduced.
found that 120 acknowledged either that they still masturbate or that they had done so during a long period.\textsuperscript{1} Gualino found that 23 per cent. men of the professional classes in North Italy masturbate about puberty; no account was taken of those who began later. "Here in Switzerland," a correspondent writes, "I have had occasion to learn from adult men, whom I can trust, that they have reached the age of twenty-five, or over, without sexual congress. 'Wir haben nicht dieses Bedürfniss,' is what they say. But I believe that, in the case of the Swiss mountaineers, moderate onanism is practiced, as a rule." In hot countries the same habits are found at a more precocious age. In Venezuela, for instance, among the Spanish creoles, Ernst found that in all classes boys and girls are infested with the vice of onanism. They learn it early, in the very beginning of life, from their wet-nurses, generally low Mulatto women, and many reasons help to foster the habit; the young men are often dissipated and the young women often remain single.\textsuperscript{2} Niceforo, who shows a special knowledge of the working-girl class at Rome, states that in many milliners' and dressmakers' workrooms, where young girls are employed, it frequently happens that during the hottest hours of the day, between twelve and two, when the mistress or forewoman is asleep, all the girls without exception give themselves up to masturbation.\textsuperscript{3} In France a country curé assured Debreyne that among the little girls who come up for their first communion, 11 out of 13 were given to masturbation.\textsuperscript{4} The medical officer of a Prussian reformatory told Rohleder that nearly all the inmates over the age of puberty masturbated. Stanley Hall knew a reform school in America where masturbation was practiced without exception, and he who could

\textsuperscript{1} Moraglia, "Die Onanie beim normalen Weibe und bei den Prostituierten," Zeitschrift für Criminal-Anthropologie, 1897, p. 489. It should be added that Moraglia is not a very critical investigator. It is probable, however, that on this point his results are an approximation to the truth.


\textsuperscript{3} Niceforo, Il Gergo nei Normali, etc., 1897, cap. V.

\textsuperscript{4} Debreyne, Muchiologie, p. 64. Yet theologians and casuists, Debreyne remarks, frequently never refer to masturbation in women.
practice it oftenest was regarded with hero-worship.\(^1\) Ferriani, who has made an elaborate study of youthful criminality in Italy, states that even if all boys and girls among the general population do not masturbate, it is certainly so among those who have a tendency to crime. Among 458 adult male criminals, Marro (as he states in his *Caratteri dei Delinquenti*) found that only 72 denied masturbation, while 386 had practiced it from an early age, 140 of them before the age of thirteen. Among 30 criminal women Moraglia found that 24 acknowledged the practice, at all events in early youth (8 of them before the age of 10, a precocity accompanied by average precocity in menstruation), while he suspected that most of the remainder were not unfamiliar with the practice. Among prostitutes of whatever class or position Moraglia found masturbation (though it must be pointed out that he does not appear to distinguish masturbation very clearly from homosexual practices) to be universal; in one group of 50 prostitutes everyone had practiced masturbation at some period; 28 began between the ages of 6 and 11; 19, between 12 and 14, the most usual period—a precocious one—of commencing puberty; the remaining 3 at 15 and 16; the average age of commencing masturbation, it may be added, was 11, while that of the first sexual intercourse was 15.\(^2\) In a larger group of 180 prostitutes, belonging to Genoa, Turin, Venice, etc., and among 23 “elegant cocottes,” of Italian and foreign origin, Moraglia obtained the same results; everyone admitted masturbation, and not less than 113 preferred masturbation, either solitary or mutual, to normal coitus. Among the insane, as among idiots, masturbation is somewhat more common among males, according to Blandford, in England, as also it is in Germany, according to Nücke,\(^3\) while Venturi, in Italy, has found it more common among females.\(^4\)

There appears to be no limit to the age at which spontaneous masturbation may begin to appear. I have already referred to

---

\(^1\) Stanley Hall, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 34. Hall mentions, also, that masturbation is specially common among the blind.

\(^2\) Moraglia, *Archivio di Psychiatria*, vol. xvi, fasc. 4 and 5, p. 313.

\(^3\) See his careful study, “Die Sexuellen Perversitäten in der Irrenanstalt,” *Psychiatrische Bladen*, No. 2, 1899.

the practice of thigh-rubbing in infants under one year of age. J. P. West has reported in detail 3 cases of masturbation in very early childhood—2 in girls, 1 in a boy—in which the practice had been acquired spontaneously, and could only be traced to some source of irritation in pressure from clothing, etc.\(^1\) Probably there is often in such cases some hereditary lack of nervous stability. Block has recorded the case of a girl—very bright for her age, though excessively shy and taciturn—who began masturbating spontaneously at the age of two; in this case the mother had masturbated all her life, even continuing the practice after marriage, and, though she succeeded in refraining during pregnancy, her thoughts still dwelt upon it, while the maternal grandmother had died in an asylum from "masturbatory insanity."

Freud considers that auto-erotic manifestations are common in infancy, and that the rhythmic function of any sensitive spot, primarily the lips, may easily pass into masturbation. He regards the infantile manifestations of which thumb-sucking is the most familiar example (Lüdeln or Lutschen in German) as auto-erotic, the germ arising in sucking the breasts since the lips are an erogenous zone which may easily be excited by the warm stream of milk. But this only occurs, he points out, in subjects in whom the sensitivity of the lip zone is heightened and especially in those who at a later age are liable to become hysterical.\(^2\) Shuttleworth also points out that the mere fidgetiness of a neurotic infant, even when only a few months old, sometimes leads to the spontaneous and accidental discovery of pleasurable sexual sensations, which for a time appease the restlessness of nervous instability, though a vicious circle is thus established. He has found that, especially among quite young girls of neurotic heredity, self-induced excitement, often in the form of thigfriction, is more common than is usually supposed.\(^3\)

Normally there appears to be a varying aptitude to experi-

---


\(^2\) Freud, *Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*, pp. 36 et seq.

ence the sexual organism, or any voluptuous sensations before puberty. I find, on eliciting the recollections of normal persons, that in some cases there have been voluptuous sensations from casual contact with the sexual organs at a very early age; in other cases there has been occasional slight excitement from early years; in yet other cases complete sexual anaesthesia until the age of puberty. That the latter condition is not due to mere absence of peripheral irritation is shown by a case I am acquainted with, in which a boy of 7, incited by a companion, innocently attempted, at intervals during several weeks, to produce erection by friction of the penis; no result of any kind followed, although erections occurred spontaneously at puberty, with normal sexual feelings.¹

I am indebted to a correspondent for the following notes:—

"From my observation during five years at a boarding-school, it seems that eight out of ten boys were more or less addicted to the practice. But I would not state positively that such was the proportion of masturbators among an average of thirty pupils, though the habit was very common. I know that in one bedroom, sleeping seven boys, the whole number masturbated frequently. The act was performed in bed, in the closets, and sometimes in the classrooms during lessons. Inquiry among my friends as to onanism in the boarding-schools to which they were sent, elicited somewhat contradictory answers concerning the frequency of the habit. Dr. ——, who went to a French school, told me that all the older boys had younger accomplices in mutual masturbation. He also spoke with experience of the prevalence of the practice in a well-known public school in the west of England. B. said all the boys at his school masturbated; G. stated that most of his schoolmates were onanists; L. said 'more than half' was the proportion.

"At my school, manual masturbation was both solitary and mutual; and sometimes younger boys, who had not acquired the habit, were induced to manipulate bigger boys. One very precocious boy of fifteen always chose a companion of ten 'because his hand was like a woman's.' Sometimes boys entered their friend's bed for mutual excitement. In after-life they showed no signs of inversion. Another boy, aged about fourteen, who had been seduced by a servant-girl, embraced the bolster; the pleasurable sensations, according to his statement, were heightened by imagining that the bolster was a woman. He said that the enjoyment

¹ See for a detailed study of sexuality in childhood, Moll's valuable book, Das Sexualleben des Kindes; cf. vol. vi of these Studies, Ch. II.
of the act was greatly increased during the holidays, when he was able to spread a pair of his sister's drawers upon the pillow, and so intensify the illusion.

"Before puberty the boys appeared to be more continent than afterward. A few of the older and more intelligent masturbators regulated the habit, as some married men regulate intercourse. The big boy referred to, who chose always the same manipulator, professed to indulge only once in twenty days, his reason being that more frequent repetition of the act would injure his health. About twice a week for boys who had reached puberty, and once a week for younger boys, was, I think, about the average indulgence. I have never met with a parallel of one of those cases of excessive masturbation recorded by many doctors. There may have been such cases at this school; but, if so, the boys concealed the frequency of their gratifications.

"My experience proved that many of the lads regarded masturbation as reprehensible; but their plea was 'everyone does it.' Some, often those who indulged inordinately and more secretly than their companions, gravely condemned the practice as sinful. A few seemed to think there was 'no harm in it,' but that the habit might stunt the growth and weaken the body if practiced very frequently. The greater number made no attempt to conceal the habit, they enlarged upon the pleasure of it: it was 'ever so much nicer than eating tarts,' etc.

"The chief cause I believe to be initiation by an older schoolmate. But I have known accidental causes, such as the discovery that swarming up a pole pleasurably excited the organ, rubbing to allay irritation, and simple, curious handling of the erect penis in the early morning before rising from bed."

I quote the foregoing communication as perhaps a fairly typical experience in a British school, though I am myself inclined to think that the prevalence of masturbation in schools is often much overrated. For, while in some schools the practice is doubtless rampant, in others it is practically unknown. Or, at all events, only practiced by a few individuals in secret. My own early recollections of (private) school-life fail to yield any reminiscences of any kind connected with either masturbation or homosexuality; and, while such happy ignorance may be the exception rather than the rule, I am certainly inclined to believe that—owing to race and climate, and healthier conditions of life—the sexual impulse is less precocious and less prominently developed during the school-age in England than in some Continental countries. It is probably to this delayed development that we should attribute the contrast that Ferrero finds (L'Europa Giovane, pp. 151-56), and certainly states too absolutely, between the sexual reserve of young Englishmen and the sexual immodesty of his own countrymen.

In Germany, Nöcke has also stated ("Kritisches zum Kapitel der
Sexualität," Archiv für Psychiatrie, pp. 354-56, 1899) that he heard
nothing at school either of masturbation or homosexuality, and he
records the experience of medical friends who stated that such phe-
nomena were only rare exceptions, and regarded by the majority of
the boys as exhibitions of "Schweinerei." At other German schools, as
Hoche has shown, sexual practices are very prevalent. It is evident that
at different schools, and even at the same school at different times, these
manifestations vary in frequency within wide limits.

Such variations, it seems to me, are due to two causes. In the
first place, they largely depend upon the character of the more influ-
ential elder boys. In the second place, they depend upon the attitude
of the head-master. With reference to this point I may quote from a
letter written by an experienced master in one of the most famous
English public schools: "When I first came to —, a quarter of a
century ago, Dr. — was making a crusade against this failing; boys
were sent away wholesale; the school was summoned and lectured
solemly; and the more the severities, the more rampant the disease.
I thought to myself that the remedy was creating the malady, and I
heard afterward, from an old boy, that in those days they used to talk
things over by the fireside, and think there must be something very
choice in a sin that braved so much. Dr. — went, and, under —,
we never spoke of such things. Curiosity died down, and the thing itself,
I believe, was lessened. We were told to warn new boys of the dangers
to health and morals of such offences, lest the innocent should be caught
in ignorance. I have only spoken to a few; I think the great thing
is not to put it in boys' heads. I have noticed solitary faults most
commonly, and then I tell the boy how he is physically weakening him-
self. If you notice, it is puppies that seem to go against Nature, but
grown dogs, never. So, if two small boys acted thus, I should think it
merely an instinctive feeling after Nature, which would amend itself.
Many here would consider it a heinous sin, but those who think such
things sins make them sins. I have seen, in the old days, most delight-
ful little children sent away, branded with infamy, and scarce knowing
why—you might as well expel a boy for scratching his head when it
itched. I am sure the soundest way is to treat it as a doctor would, and
explain to the boy the physical effects of over-indulgence of any sort.
When it is combated from the monkish standpoint, the evil becomes an
epidemic." I am, however, far from anxious to indorse the policy of
ignoring the sexual phenomena of youth. It is not the speaking about
such things that should be called in question, but the wisdom and good
sense of the speaker. We ought to expect a head-master to possess both
an adequate acquaintance with the nature of the phenomena of auto-
erotism and homosexuality, and a reasonable amount of tact in dealing
with boys; he may then fairly be trusted to exercise his own judgment.
AUTO-EROTISM.

It may be doubted whether boys should be made too alive to the existence of sexual phenomena; there can be no doubt about their teachers. The same is, of course, true as regards girls, among whom the same phenomena, though less obtrusive, are not less liable to occur.

As to whether masturbation is more common in one sex than the other, there have been considerable differences of opinion. Tissot considered it more prevalent among women; Christian believed it commoner among men; Deslandes and Iwan Bloch hold that there are no sexual differences, and Garnier was doubtful. Lawson Tait, in his Diseases of Women, stated his opinion that in England, while very common among boys, it is relatively rare among women, and then usually taught. Spitzka, in America, also found it relatively rare among women, and Dana considers it commoner in boys than in girls or adults.\footnote{This is, no doubt, the most common opinion, and it is frequently repeated in text-books. It is scarcely necessary, however, to point out that only the opinions of those who have given special attention to the matter can carry any weight. R. W. Shufeldt ("On a Case of Female Impotency," pp. 5-7) quotes the opinions of various cautious observers as to the difficulty of detecting masturbation in women.}

\footnote{This latter opinion is confirmed by Nïcke so far as the insane are concerned. In a careful study of sexual perversity in a large asylum, Nïcke found that, while moderate masturbation could be more easily traced among men than among women, excessive masturbation was more common among women. And, while among the men masturbation was most frequent in the lowest grades of mental development (idiocy and imbecility), and least frequent in the highest grades (general paralysis), in the women it was the reverse. (P. Nïcke, "Die Sexuellen Perversitäten in der Irrenanstalt," Psychiatrische en Neurologische Bladen, No. 2, 1890.)}

Moll is inclined to think that masturbation is less common in women and girls than in the male sex. Rohleder believes that after puberty, when it is equally common in both sexes, it is more frequently found in men, but that women masturbate with more passion and imaginative fervor. Kellogg, in America, says it is equally prevalent in both sexes, but that women are more secretive. Morris, also in America, considers, on the other hand, that persistent masturbation is commoner in women, and accounts for this by the healthier life and traditions of boys. Pouillet, who studied the matter with considerable thoroughness in France, came to the conclusion that masturbation is commoner among
women, among whom he found it to be equally prevalent in rich and poor, and especially so in the great centres of civilization. In Russia, Guttceit states in his *Dreissig Jahre Praxis*, that from the ages of 10 to 16 boys masturbate more than girls, who know less about the practice which has not for them the charm of the forbidden, but after 16 he finds the practice more frequent in girls and women than in youths and men. Näcke, in Germany, believes that there is much evidence pointing in the same direction, and Adler considers masturbation very common in women. Moraglia is decidedly of the opinion, on the ground of his own observations already alluded to, that masturbation is more frequent among women; he refers to the fact—a very significant fact, as I shall elsewhere have to point out—that, while in man there is only one sexual centre, the penis, in woman there are several centres,—the clitoris, the vagina, the uterus, the breasts,—and he mentions that he knew a prostitute, a well-developed brunette of somewhat nervous temperament, who boasted that she knew fourteen ways of masturbating herself.

My own opinion is that the question of the sexual distribution of masturbation has been somewhat obscured by that harmful tendency, to which I have already alluded, to concentrate attention on a particular set of auto-erotic phenomena. We must group and divide our facts rationally if we wish to command them. If we confine our attention to very young children, the available evidence shows that the practice is much more common in females, and such a result is in harmony with the fact that precocious puberty is most often found in female children. At

1 Mammary masturbation sometimes occurs; see, e.g., Rohleder, *Die Masturbation* (pp. 32-33); it is, however, rare.

2 Hirschsprung pointed out this, indeed, many years ago, on the ground of his own experience. And see Rohleder, op. cit., pp. 44-47.

3 In many cases, of course, the physical precocity is associated with precocity in sexual habits. An instructive case is reported (*Alicornist and Neurologist*, October, 1895) of a girl of 7, a beautiful child, of healthy family, and very intelligent, who, from the age of three, was perpetually masturbating, when not watched. The clitoris and mons veneris were those of a fully-grown woman, and the child was as well informed upon most subjects as an average woman. She was cured by care and hygienic attention, and when seen last was in excellent condition. A medical friend tells me of a little girl of two, whose external genital organs are greatly developed, and who is always rubbing herself.
puberty and adolescence occasional or frequent masturbation is common in both boys and girls, though, I believe, less common than is sometimes supposed; it is difficult to say whether it is more prevalent among boys or girls; one is inclined to conclude that it prevails more widely among boys. The sexual impulse, and consequently the tendency to masturbation, tend to be aroused later, and less easily in girls than in youths, though it must also be remembered that boys’ traditions and their more active life keep the tendency in abeyance, while in girls there is much less frequently any restraining influence of corresponding character.\(^1\) In my study of inversion I have found that ignorance and the same absence of tradition are probably factors in the prevalence of homosexual tendencies among women.\(^2\) After adolescence I think there can be no doubt that masturbation is more common in women than in men. Men have, by this time, mostly adopted some method of sexual gratification with the opposite sex; women are to a much larger extent shut out from such gratification; moreover, while in rare cases women are sexually precocious, it more often happens that their sexual impulses only gain strength and self-consciousness after adolescence has passed. I have been much impressed by the frequency with which masturbation is occasionally (especially about the period of menstruation) practiced by active, intelligent, and

---

\(^1\) R. T. Morris, of New York, has also pointed out the influence of traditions in this respect. “Among boys,” he remarks, “there are traditions to the effect that self-abuse is harmful. Among girls, however, there are no such saving traditions.” Dr. Kiernan writes in a private letter: “It has been by experience, that from ignorance or otherwise, there are young women who do not look upon sexual manipulation with the same fear that men do.” Guttceit, similarly, remarks that men have been warned of masturbation, and fear its evil results, while girls, even if warned, attach little importance to the warning; he adds that in healthy women, masturbation, even in excess, has little bad results. The attitude of many women in this matter may be illustrated by the following passage from a letter written by a medical friend in India: “The other day one of my English women patients gave me the following reason for having taught the 17-year-old daughter of a retired Colonel to masturbate: ‘Poor girl, she was troubled with dreams of men, and in case she should be tempted with one, and become pregnant, I taught her to bring the feeling on herself—as it is safer, and, after all, nearly as nice as with a man.’”

healthy women who otherwise lead a chaste life. This experience is confirmed by others who are in a position to ascertain the facts among normal people; thus a lady, who has received the confidence of many women, told me that she believes that all women who remain unmarried masturbate, as she found so much evidence pointing in this direction.\(^1\) This statement certainly needs some qualification, though I believe it is not far from the truth as regards young and healthy women who, after having normal sexual relationships, have been compelled for some reason or other to break them off and lead a lonely life.\(^2\) But we have to remember that there are some women, evidently with a considerable degree of congenital sexual anesthesia (no doubt, in some respect or another below the standard of normal health), in whom the sexual instinct has never been aroused, and who not only do not masturbate, but do not show any desire for normal gratification; while in a large proportion of other cases the impulse is gratified passively in ways I have already referred to. The auto-erotic phenomena which take place in this way, spontaneously, by yielding to revery, with little or no active interference, certainly occur much more frequently in women than in men. On the other hand, contrary to what one might be led to expect, the closely-related auto-erotic phenomena during sleep seem to take place more frequently in men, although in women, as we have found ground for concluding, they reverberate much more widely and impressively on the waking psychical life.

We owe to Restif de la Bretonne what is perhaps the earliest precise description of a woman masturbating. In 1755 he knew a dark young woman, plain but well-made, and of warm temperament, educated in a convent. She was observed one day, when gazing from her window at a young man in whom she was tenderly interested, to become much excited. "Her movements became agitated; I approached her, and really believe that she was uttering affectionate expressions; she had become red. Then she sighed deeply, and became motionless,

\(^1\) See, also, the Appendix to the third volume of these Studies, in which I have brought forward sexual histories of normal persons.

\(^2\) E. H. Smith, also, states that from 25 to 35 is the age when most women come under the physician's eye with manifest and pronounced habits of masturbation.
stretching out her legs, which she stiffened, as if she felt pain." It is further hinted that her hands took part in this manoeuvre (Monsieur Nicolas, vol. vi, p. 143).

Pictorial representations of a woman masturbating also occur in eighteenth century engravings. Thus, in France, Baudouin's "Le Midi" (reproduced in Fuchs's Das Erotische Element in der Karikatur, Fig. 92), represents an elegant young lady in a rococo garden-bower; she has been reading a book she has now just dropped, together with her sunshade; she leans languorously back, and her hand begins to find its way through her placket-hole.

Adler, who has studied masturbation in women with mere care than any previous writer, has recorded in detail the auto-erotic manifestations involved in the case of an intelligent and unprejudiced woman, aged 30, who had begun masturbating when twenty, and practiced it at intervals of a few weeks. She experienced the desire for sexual gratification under the following circumstances: (1) spontaneously, directly before or after menstruation; (2) as a method to cure sleeplessness; (3) after washing the parts with warm (but not cold) water; (4) after erotic dreams; (5) quite suddenly, without definite cause. The phenomena of the masturbatory process fell into two stages: (1) incomplete excitement, (2) the highest pleasurable gratification. It only took place in the evening, or at night, and a special position was necessary, with the right knee bent, and the right foot against the knee of the extended left leg. The bent index and middle fingers of the right hand were then applied firmly to the lower third of the left labium minus, which was rubbed against the underlying parts. At this stage, the manifestations sometimes stopped, either from an effort of self-control or from fatigue of the arm. There was no emission of mucus, or general perspiration, but some degree of satisfaction and of fatigue, followed by sleep. If, however, the manipulation was continued, the second stage was reached, and the middle finger sank into the vagina, while the index finger remained on the labium, the rest of the hand holding and compressing the whole of the vulva, from pubes to anus, against the symphysis, with a backwards and forwards movement, the left hand also being frequently used to support and assist the right. The parts now gave a mushroom-like feeling to the touch, and in a few seconds, or after a longer interval, the complete feeling of pleasurable satisfaction was attained. At the same moment there was (but only after she had had experience of coitus) an involuntary elevation of the pelvis, together with emission of mucus, making the hand wet, this mucus having an odor, and being quite distinct from the ordinary odorless mucus of the vagina; at the same time, the finger in the vagina felt slight contractions of the whole vaginal wall. The climax of sexual pleasure lasted a few seconds, with its concomitant
vaginal contractions, then slowly subsided with a feeling of general well-being, the finger at the same time slipping out of the vagina, and she was left in a state of general perspiration, and sleep would immediately follow; when this was not the case, she was frequently conscious of some degree of sensibility in the sacrum, lasting for several hours, and especially felt when sitting. When masturbation was the result of an erotic dream (which occurred but seldom), the first stage was already reached in sleep, and the second was more quickly obtained. During the act it was only occasionally that any thoughts of men or of coitus were present, the attention being fixed on the coming climax. The psychic state afterwards was usually one of self-reproach. (O. Adler, *Die Mangelhafte Geschlechtsempfindung des Weibes*, 1904, pp. 26-29.) The phenomena in this case may be regarded as fairly typical, but there are many individual variations; mucus emissions and vaginal contractions frequently occur before actual orgasm, and there is not usually any insertion of the finger into the vagina in women who have never experienced coitus, or, indeed, even in those who have.

We must now turn to that aspect of our subject which in the past has always seemed the only aspect of auto-erotic phenomena meriting attention: the symptoms and results of chronic masturbation. It appears to have been an Englishman who, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, first called popular attention to the supposed evils of masturbation. His book was published in London, and entitled: *Onania, or the Heinous Sin of Self-pollution, and all its Frightful Consequences in both Sexes, Considered, with Spiritual and Physical Advice*, etc. It is not a serious medical treatise, but an early and certainly superior example of a kind of literature which we have since become familiar with through the daily newspapers. A large part of the book, which is cleverly written, is devoted in the later editions to the letters of nervous and hypochondriacal young men and women, who are too shy to visit the author, but request him to send a bottle of his “Strengthening Tincture,” and mention that they are inclosing half a guinea, a guinea, or still larger sum. Concerning the composition of the “Strengthening Tincture” we are not informed.1 This work, which was subsequently attrib-
uted to a writer named Bekkers, is said to have passed through no less than eighty editions, and it was translated into German. Tissot, a physician of Lausanne, followed with his Traité de l'Onanisme: Dissertation sur les Maladies produites par la Masturbation, first published in Latin (1760), then in French (1764), and afterward in nearly all European languages. He regarded masturbation as a crime, and as "an act of suicide." His book is a production of amusing exaggeration and rhetoric, zealously setting forth the prodigious evils of masturbation in a style which combines, as Christian remarks, the strains of Rousseau with a vein of religious piety. Tissot included only manual self-abuse under the term "onanism;" shortly afterward, Voltaire, in his Dictionnaire Philosophique, took up the subject, giving it a wider meaning and still further popularizing it. Finally Lallemand, at a somewhat later period (1836), wrote a book which was, indeed, more scientific in character, but which still sought to represent masturbation as the source of all evils. These four writers—the author of Onania, Tissot, Voltaire, Lallemand—are certainly responsible for much. The mistaken notions of many medical authorities, carried on by tradition, even down to our own time; the powerful lever which has been put into the hand of unscrupulous quacks; the suffering, dread, and remorse experienced in silence by many thousands of ignorant and often innocent young people may all be traced in large measure back to these four well-meaning, but (on this question) misguided, authors.

There is really no end to the list of real or supposed symptoms and results of masturbation, as given by various medical writers during the last century. Insanity, epilepsy, numerous forms of eye disease, supra-orbital headache, occipital headache (Spitzka), strange sensations at the top of the head (Savage), various forms of neuralgia (Anstie, J. Chapman), tenderness of the skin in the lower dorsal region (Chapman), mammary tenderness in young girls (Lacassagne), mammary hypertrophy (Ossendovsky), asthma (Peyer), cardiac murmurs (Seerley), the appearance of vesicles on wounds (Baraduc), acne and other forms of cutaneous eruptions (the author of Onania, Clipson),
dilated pupils (Skene, Lewis, Moraglia), eyes directed upward and sideways (Pouillet), dark rings around the eyes, intermittent functional deafness (Bonnier), painful menstruation (J. Chapman), catarrh of uterus and vagina (Winckel, Pouillet), ovarian disease (Jessett), pale and discolored skin (Lewis, Moraglia), redness of nose (Gruner), epistaxis (Joal, J. N. Mackenzie), morbid changes in nose (Fliess), convulsive cough of puberty (Gowers), acidity of vagina (R. W. Shufeldt), incontinence of urine in young women (Girandau), warts on the hands in women (Durr, Kriehmar, von Oye), hallucinations of smell and hearing, (Griesinger, Lewis), intermittent functional deafness (Bonnier), indican in the urine (Herter), an indescribable odor of the skin in women (Skene), these are but a few of the signs and consequences of masturbation given by various prominent authorities.  

That many of these manifestations do occur in connection with masturbation is unquestionable; there is also good reason to believe that some of them may be the results of masturbation acting on an imperfectly healthy organism. But in all such cases we must speak with great caution, for there appears to be little reliable evidence to show that simple masturbation, in a well-born and healthy individual, can produce any evil results beyond slight functional disturbances, and these only when it is practiced in excess. To illustrate the real pathological relationships of masturbation, a few typical and important disorders may be briefly considered.

The delicate mechanism of the eye is one of the first portions of the nervous apparatus to be disturbed by any undue strain on the system; it is not surprising that masturbation should be widely incriminated as a cause of eye troubles. If, however, we inquire into the results obtained by the most cautious and experienced ophthalmological observers, it grows evident that masturbation, as a cause of disease of the eye, becomes merged into wider causes. In Germany, Hermann Cohn, the distinguished ophthalmic surgeon of Breslau, has dealt fully with the ques-

---

1 Pouillet alone enumerates and apparently accepts considerably over one hundred different morbid conditions as signs and results of masturbation.
tion. Cohn, who believes that all young men and women masturbate to some extent, finds that masturbation must be excessive for eye trouble to become apparent. In most of his cases there was masturbation several times daily during from five to seven years, in many during ten years, and in one during twenty-three years. In such cases we are obviously dealing with abnormal persons, and no one will dispute the possibility of harmful results; in some of the cases, when masturbation was stopped, the eye trouble improved. Even in these cases, however, the troubles were but slight, the chief being, apparently, photopsia (a subjective sensation of light) with otherwise normal conditions of pupil, vision, color-sense, and retina. In some cases there was photophobia, and he has also found paralysis of accommodation and conjunctivitis. At a later date Salmo Cohn, in his comprehensive monograph on the relationship between the eye and the sexual organs in women, brought together numerous cases of eye troubles in young women associated with masturbation, but in most of these cases masturbation had been practiced with great frequency for a long period and the ocular affections were usually not serious. In England, Power has investigated the relations of the sexual system to eye disease. He is inclined to think that the effects of masturbation have been exaggerated, but he believes that it may produce such for the most part trivial complaints as photopsia, muscae, muscular asthenopia, possibly blepharospasm, and perhaps conjunctivitis. He goes on, however, to point out that more serious complaints of the eye are caused by excess in normal coitus, by sexual abstinence, and especially by disordered menstruation. Thus we see that even when we are considering a mechanism so delicately poised and one so easily disturbed by any jar of the system as vision, masturbation produces no effect except when carried to an extent which argues a hereditarily imperfect organism, while even in these cases the effects are usually but slight, moreover, in no respect specific, but

2 Salmo Cohn, Uterus und Augen, 1890, pp. 63-66.
are paralleled and even exceeded by the results of other disturbances of the sexual system.

Let us turn to the supposed influence of masturbation in causing insanity and nervous diseases. Here we may chiefly realize the immense influence exerted on medical science by Tissot and his followers during a hundred years. Mental weakness is the cause and not the result of excessive masturbation, Gall declared, but he was a man of genius, in isolation. Sir William Ellis, an alienist of considerable reputation at the beginning of the last century, could write with scientific equanimity: "I have no hesitation in saying that, in a very large number of patients in all public asylums, the disease may be attributed to that cause." He does, indeed, admit that it may be only a symptom sometimes, but goes on to assert that masturbation "has not hitherto been exhibited in the awful light in which it deserves to be shown," and that "in by far the greater number of cases" it is the true cause of dementia. Esquirol lent his name and influence to a similar view of the pernicious influence of masturbation. Throughout the century, even down to the present day, this point of view has been traditionally preserved in a modified form. In apparent ignorance of the enormous prevalence of masturbation, and without, so far as can be seen, any attempt to distinguish between cause and effect or to eliminate the hereditary neuropathic element, many alienists have set down a large proportion of cases of insanity, idiocy, epilepsy, and disease of the spinal cord to uncomplicated masturbation. Thus, at the Matteawan State Hospital (New York) for criminal lunatics and insane prisoners, from 1875 to 1907, masturbation was the sole assigned cause of insanity in 160 men (out of 2,595); while, according to Dr. Clara Barrus, among 121 cases of insanity in young women, masturbation is the cause in ten cases. It is unnecessary to multiply examples, for this traditional tendency is familiar to all.

1 Fonctions du Cerveau, 1825, vol. iii, p. 337.
2 W. Ellis, Treatise on Insanity, 1838, pp. 335, 340.
3 Clara Barrus, "Insanity in Young Women," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, June, 1896.
It appears to have been largely due to Griesinger, in the middle of the last century, that we owe the first authoritative appearance of a saner, more discriminating view regarding the results of masturbation. Although still to some extent fettered by the traditions prevalent in his day, Griesinger saw that it was not so much masturbation itself as the feelings aroused in sensitive minds by the social attitude toward masturbation which produced evil effects. "That constant struggle," he wrote, "against a desire which is even overpowering, and to which the individual always in the end succumbs, that hidden strife between shame, repentance, good intentions, and the irritation which impels to the act, this, after not a little acquaintance with onanists, we consider to be far more important than the primary direct physical effect." He added that there are no specific signs of masturbation, and concluded that it is oftener a symptom than a cause. The general progress of educated opinions since that date has, in the main, confirmed and carried forward the results cautiously stated by Griesinger. This distinguished alienist thought that, when practiced in childhood, masturbation might lead to insanity. Berkhan, in his investigation of the psychoses of childhood, found that in no single case was masturbation a cause. Vogel, Uffelmann, and Emminghaus, in the course of similar studies, have all come to almost similar conclusions.\(^1\)

It is only on a congenitally morbid nervous system, Emminghaus insists, that masturbation can produce any serious results. "Most of the cases charged to masturbation," writes Kiernan (in a private letter), basing his opinion on wide clinical experience, "are either hebephrenia or hysteria in which an effect is taken for the cause." Christian, during twenty years' experience in hospitals, asylums, and private practice in town and country, has not found any seriously evil effects from masturbation.\(^2\)

He thinks, indeed, that it may be a more serious evil in women than in men. But Yellowlees considers that in women

---


2 Christian, article "Onanisme," Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales."
"it is possibly less exhausting and injurious than in the other sex," which was also the opinion of Hammond, as well as of Gutteceit, though he found that women pushed the practice much further than men, and Nägeke, who has given special attention to this point, could not find that masturbation is a definite cause of insanity in women in a single case.\(^1\) Koch also reaches a similar conclusion, as regards both sexes, though he admits that masturbation may cause some degree of psychopathic deterioration. Even in this respect, however, he points out that "when practiced in moderation it is not injurious in the certain and exceptionless way in which it is believed to be in many circles. It is the people whose nervous systems are already injured who masturbate most easily and practice it more immoderately than others"; the chief source of its evil is self-reproach and the struggle with the impulse.\(^2\) Kahlbaum, it is true, under the influence of the older tradition, when he erected katatonia into a separate disorder (not always accepted in later times), regarded prolonged and excessive masturbation as a chief cause, but I am not aware that he ever asserted that it was a sole and sufficient cause in a healthy organism. Kiernan, one of the earliest writers on katatonia, was careful to point out that masturbation was probably as much effect as cause of the morbid nervous condition.\(^3\) Maudsley (in *Body and Mind*) recognized masturbation as a special exciting cause of a characteristic form of insanity; but he cautiously added: "Nevertheless, I think that self-abuse seldom, if ever, produces it without the co-operation of the insane neurosis."\(^4\) Schüle also recognized a specific masturbatory insanity, but the general tendency to reject any such nosological form is becoming marked; Krafft-Ebing long since rejected it and Nägeke decidedly opposes it. Kraepelin states that excessive masturbation can only occur in a dangerous degree in predis-

---

1 Nägeke, *Verbrechen und Wahnsinn beim Weibe*, 1894, p. 57.
4 Maudsley dealt, in his vigorous, picturesque manner, with the more extreme morbid mental conditions sometimes found associated with masturbation, in "Illustrations of a Variety of Insanity," *Journal of Mental Science*, July, 1868.
posed subjects; so, also, Forel and Löwenfeld, as at an earlier period, Trouseau.\(^1\) It is true that Marro, in his admirable and detailed study of the normal and abnormal aspects of puberty, accepts a form of masturbatory insanity; but the only illustrative case he brings forward is a young man possessing various stigmata of degeneracy and the son of an alcoholic father; such a case tells us nothing regarding the results of simple masturbation.\(^2\) Even Spitzka, who maintained several years ago the traditional views as to the terrible results of masturbation, and recognized a special “insanity of masturbation,” stated his conclusions with a caution that undermined his position: “Self-abuse,” he concluded, “to become a sole cause of insanity, must be begun early and carried very far. In persons of sound antecedents it rarely, under these circumstances, suffices to produce an actual vesania.”\(^3\) When we remember that there is no convincing evidence to show that masturbation is “begun early and carried very far” by “persons of sound antecedents,” the significance of Spitzka’s “typical psychosis of masturbation” is somewhat annulled. It is evident that these distinguished investigators, Marro and Spitzka, have been induced by tradition to take up a position which their own scientific consciences have compelled them practically to evacuate.

Recent authorities are almost unanimous in rejecting masturbation as a cause of insanity. Thus, Rohleder, in his comprehensive monograph (\textit{Die Masturbation}, 1899, pp. 185-92), although taking a very serious view of the evil results of masturbation, points out the unanimity which is now tending to prevail on this point, and lays it down that “masturbation is never the direct cause of insanity.” Sexual excesses of any kind, he adds (following Curschmann), can, at the most, merely give an impetus to a latent form of insanity. On the whole, he concludes, the best authorities are unanimous in agreeing that masturbation may certainly injure mental capacity, by weakening memory and depressing intellectual energy; that, further, in hereditarily neurotic subjects, it may produce slight psychoses like \textit{folie du doute}, hypo-

\(^1\) See, \textit{e.g.}, Löwenfeld, \textit{Sexualleben und Nervenleiden}, 2d. ed., Ch. VIII.


chondria, hysteria; that, finally, under no circumstances can it produce severe psychoses like paranoia or general paralysis. "If it caused insanity, as often as some claim," as Kellogg remarks, "the whole race would long since have passed into masturbatic degeneracy of mind.

. . . It is especially injurious in the very young, and in all who have weak nervous systems," but "the physical traits attributed to the habit are common to thousands of neurasthenic and neurotic individuals." (Kellogg. *A Text-book of Mental Diseases*, 1897, pp. 94-95.) Again, at the outset of the article on "Masturbation," in Tuke's *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*, Yellowlees states that, on account of the mischief formerly done by reckless statements, it is necessary to state plainly that "unless the practice has been long and greatly indulged, no permanent evil effects may be observed to follow." Näcke, again, has declared ("Kritisches zum Kapitel der Sexualität," *Archiv für Psychiatrie*, 1899): "There are neither somatic nor psychic symptoms peculiar on onanism. Nor is there any specific onanistic psychosis. I am prepared to deny that onanism ever produces any psychoses in those who are not already predisposed." That such a view is now becoming widely prevalent is illustrated by the cautious and temperate discussion of masturbation in a recent work by a non-medical writer, Geoffrey Mortimer (*Chapters on Human Love*, pp. 199-205).

The testimony of expert witnesses with regard to the influence of masturbation in producing other forms of psychoses and neuroses is becoming equally decisive; and here, also, the traditions of Tissot are being slowly effaced. "I have not, in the whole of my practice," wrote West, forty years ago, "out of a large experience among children and women, seen convulsions, epilepsy, or idiocy induced by masturbation in any child of either sex. Neither have I seen any instance in which hysteria, epilepsy, or insanity in women after puberty was due to masturbation, as its efficient cause."  


2 Gowers, *Epilepsy*, 1881, p. 31. Löwenfeld believes that epileptic attacks are certainly caused by masturbation. Féré thought that both epilepsy and hysteria may be caused by masturbation.
of sexual excess. "In moderation," Erb remarks, "masturbation is not more dangerous to the spinal cord than natural coitus, and has no bad effects";¹ it makes no difference, Erb considers, whether the orgasm is effected normally or in solitude. This is also the opinion of Toulouse, of Fürbringer, and of Curschmann, as at an earlier period it was of Roubaud.

While these authorities are doubtless justified in refusing to ascribe to masturbation any part in the production of psychic or nervous diseases, it seems to me that they are going somewhat beyond their province when they assert that masturbation has no more injurious effect than coitus. If sexual coitus were a purely physiological phenomenon, this position would be sound. But the sexual orgasm is normally bound up with a mass of powerful emotions aroused by a person of the opposite sex. It is in the joy caused by the play of these emotions, as well as in the discharge of the sexual orgasm, that the satisfaction of coitus resides. In the absence of the desired partner the orgasm, whatever relief it may give, must be followed by a sense of dissatisfaction, perhaps of depression, even of exhaustion, often of shame and remorse. The same remark has since been made by Stanley Hall.² Practically, also, as John Hunter pointed out, there is more probability of excess in masturbation than in coitus. Whether, as some have asserted, masturbation involves a greater nervous effort than coitus is more doubtful.³ It thus seems somewhat misleading to assert that masturbation has no more injurious effect than coitus.⁴

Reviewing the general question of the supposed grave symp-

¹ Ziemssen's Handbuch, Bd. XI.
² Adolescence, vol. i, p. 441.
³ See a discussion of these points by Rohleder, Die Masturbation, pp. 168-175.
⁴ The surgeons, it may be remarked, have especially stated the harmlessness of masturbation in too absolute a manner. Thus, John Hunter (Treatise on the Venereal Disease, 1786, p. 200), after pointing out that "the books on this subject have done more harm than good," adds, "I think I may affirm that this act does less harm to the constitution in general than the natural." And Sir James Paget, in his lecture on "Sexual Hypochondriasis," said: "Masturbation does neither more nor less harm than sexual intercourse practiced with the same frequency, in the same conditions of general health and age and circumstances."
toms and signs of masturbation, and its pernicious results, we may reach the conclusion that in the case of moderate masturbation in healthy, well-born individuals, no seriously pernicious results necessarily follow. 1 With regard to the general signs, we may accept, as concerns both sexes, what the Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Berlin decided in 1861, in a discussion of it in women, that there are none which can be regarded as reliable. 2

We may conclude finally, with Clouston, that the opposing views on the subject may be simply explained by the fact that the writers on both sides have ignored or insufficiently recognized the influence of heredity and temperament. They have done precisely what so many unscientific writers on inebriety have continued to do unto the present day, when describing the terrible results of alcohol without pointing out that the chief factor in such cases has not been the alcohol, but the organization on which the alcohol acted. Excess may act, according to the familiar old-fashioned adage, like the lighted match. But we must always remember the obvious truth, that it makes a con-

1 It is interesting to note that an analogous result seems to hold with animals. Among highly-bred horses excessive masturbation is liable to occur with injurious results. It is scarcely necessary to point out that highly-bred horses are apt to be abnormal.

2 With regard to the physical signs, the same conclusion is reached by Legludic (in opposition to Martineau) on the basis of a large experience. He has repeatedly found, in young girls who acknowledged frequent masturbation, that the organs were perfectly healthy and normal, and his convictions are the more noteworthy, since he speaks as a pupil of Tardieu, who attached very grave significance to the local signs of sexual perversity and excess. (Legludic, Notes et Observations de Médecine Légale, 1896, p. 95.) Matthews Duncan (Goulstonian Lectures on Sterility in Women, 1884, p. 97) was often struck by the smallness, and even imperfect development, of the external genitals of women who masturbate. Clara Barrus considers that there is no necessary connection between hypertrophy of the external female genital organs and masturbation, though in six cases of prolonged masturbation she found such a condition in three (American Journal of Insanity, April, 1895, p. 479). Bechterew denies that masturbation produces enlargement of the penis, and Hammond considers there is no evidence to show that it enlarges the clitoris, while Gutzeit states that it does not enlarge the nymphæ; this, however, is doubtful. It would not suffice in many cases to show that large sexual organs are correlated with masturbation; it would still be necessary to show whether the size of the organs stood to masturbation in the relation of effect or of cause.
siderable difference whether you threw your lighted match into a
powder magazine or into the sea.

While we may thus dismiss the extravagant views widely
held during the past century, concerning the awful results of
masturbation, as due to ignorance and false tradition, it must be
pointed out that, even in healthy or moderately healthy indi-
viduals, any excess in solitary self-excitement may still produce
results which, though slight, are yet harmful. The skin, diges-
tion, and circulation may all be disordered; headache and neu-
ralgia may occur; and, as in normal sexual excess or in undue
frequency of sexual excitement during sleep, there is a certain
general lowering of nervous tone. Probably the most important
of the comparatively frequent results—though this also arises
usually on a somewhat morbid soil—is neurasthenia with its
manifold symptoms. There can be little doubt that the ancient
belief, dating from the time of Hippocrates, that sexual excesses
produce spinal disease, as well as the belief that masturbation
causes insanity, are largely due to the failure to diagnose
neurasthenia.

The following case of neurasthenia, recorded by Eulenburg, may
be given as a classical picture of the nervous disturbances which may
be associated with masturbation, and are frequently regarded as solely
cau sed by habits of masturbation: Miss H. H., 28 years of age, a robust
brunette, with fully developed figure, without any trace of anæmia
or chlorosis, but with an apathetic expression, bluish rings around
the eyes, with hypochondriacal and melancholy feelings. She complains
of pressure on the head (“as if head would burst”), giddiness, ringing
in the ears, photopsia, hemierania, pains in the back and at sacrum,
and symptoms of spinal adynamia, with a sense of fatigue on the
least exertion in walking or standing; she sways when standing with
closed eyes, tendon-reflexes exaggerated; there is a sense of oppression,
tercostal neuralgia, and all the signs of neurasthenic dyspepsia; and
cardialgia, nausea, flatulence, meteorism, and alternate constipation and
diarrhoea. She chiefly complains of a feeling of weight and pain in the
abdomen, caused by the slightest movement, and of a form of pollution
(with clitoridian spasms), especially near menstruation, with copious
flow of mucus, characteristic pains, and hyperexcitability. Menstruation
was irregular and profuse. Examination showed tumid and elongated
nymphae, with brown pigmentation; rather large vagina, with rudi-
mentary hymen; and retroflexion of uterus. After much persuasion the patient confessed that, when a girl of 12, and as the result of repeated attempts at coitus by a boy of 16, she had been impelled to frequent masturbation. This had caused great shame and remorse, which, however, had not sufficed to restrain the habit. Her mother having died, she lived alone with her invalid father, and had no one in whom to confide. Regarding herself as no longer a virgin, she had refused several offers of marriage, and thus still further aggravated her mental condition. (Eulenburg, Sexuale Neuropathic, p. 31.)

Since Beard first described neurasthenia, many diverse opinions have been expressed concerning the relationships of sexual irregularities to neurasthenia. Gilles de la Tourette, in his little monograph on neurasthenia, following the traditions of Charcot's school, dismisses the question of any sexual causation without discussion. Binswanger (Die Pathologie und Therapie der Neurasthenie), while admitting that nearly all neurasthenic persons acknowledge masturbation at some period, considers it is not an important cause of neurasthenia, only differing from coitus by the fact that the opportunities for it are more frequent, and that the sexual disturbances of neurasthenia are, in the majority of cases, secondary. Rohleder, on the other hand, who takes a very grave view of the importance of masturbation, considers that its most serious results are a question of neurasthenia. Krafft-Ebing has declared his opinion that masturbation is a cause of neurasthenia. Christian, Leyden, Erb, Rosenthal, Beard, Hummel, Hammond, Hermann Cohn, Curschmann, Savill, Herman, Förbringer, all attach chief importance to neurasthenia as a result of masturbation. Collins and Phillip (Medical Record, March 25, 1899), in an analysis of 333 cases of neurasthenia, found that 123 cases were apparently due to overwork or masturbation. Freud concludes that neurasthenia proper can nearly always be traced to excessive masturbation, or to spontaneous pollutions. (E.g., Sammlung Kleiner Schriften zur Neuropsychrie, first series, p. 187.) This view is confirmed by Gattel's careful study (Über die Sexuellen Ursachen der Neurasthenie und Angstneurose, 1898). Gattel investigated 100 consecutive cases of severe functional nervous disorder in Krafft-Ebing's clinic at Vienna, and found that in every case of neurasthenia in a male (28 in all) there was masturbation, while of the 15 women with neurasthenia, only one is recorded as not masturbating, and she practiced coitus reservatus. Irrespective of the particular form of the nervous disorder, Gattel found that 18 women out of 42, and 36 men out of 58, acknowledged masturbation. (This shows a slightly larger proportion among the men, but the men were mostly young, while the women were mostly of more mature age.) It must, however, always be remembered that we have no equally careful statistics of masturbation in perfectly healthy persons. We must also remember that we have to distinguish
between the *post* and the *propter*, and that it is quite possible that neurasthenic persons are specially predisposed to masturbation. Bloch is of this opinion, and remarks that a vicious circle may thus be formed.

On the whole, there can be little doubt that neurasthenia is liable to be associated with masturbation carried to an excessive extent. But, while neurasthenia is probably the severest affection that is liable to result from, or accompany, masturbation, we are scarcely yet entitled to accept the conclusion of Gattel that in such cases there is no hereditary neurotic predisposition. We must steer clearly between the opposite errors of those, on the one hand, who assert that heredity is the sole cause of functional nervous disorders, and those, on the other hand, who consider that the incident that may call out the disorder is itself a sole sufficient cause.

In many cases it has seemed to me that masturbation, when practiced in excess, especially if begun before the age of puberty, leads to inaptitude for coitus, as well as to indifference to it, and sometimes to undue sexual irritability, involving premature emission and practical impotence. This is, however, the exception, especially if the practice has not been begun until after puberty. In women I attach considerable importance, as a result of masturbation, to an aversion for normal coitus in later life. In such cases some peripheral irritation or abnormal mental stimulus trains the physical sexual orgasm to respond to an appeal which has nothing whatever to do with the fascination normally exerted by the opposite sex. At puberty, however, the claim of passion and the real charm of sex begin to make themselves felt, but, owing to the physical sexual feelings having been trained into a foreign channel, these new and more normal sex associations remain of a purely ideal and emotional character, without the strong sensual impulses with which under healthy conditions they tend to be more and more associated as puberty passes on into adolescence or mature adult life. I am fairly certain that in many women, often highly intellectual women, the precocious excess in masturbation has been a main cause, not necessarily the sole efficient cause, in producing a divorce in later life between the physical sensual impulses and the ideal emotions. The sensual impulse having been evolved and perverted
before the manifestation of the higher emotion, the two groups
of feelings have become divorced for the whole of life. This is
a common source of much personal misery and family unhappi-
ness, though at the same time the clash of contending impulses
may lead to a high development of moral character. When early
masturbation is a factor in producing sexual inversion it usually
operates in the manner I have here indicated, the repulsion for
normal coitus helping to furnish a soil on which the inverted im-
pulse may develop unimpeded.

This point has not wholly escaped previous observers, though they
do not seem to have noted its psychological mechanism. Tissot stated
that masturbation causes an aversion to marriage. More recently,
Loiman ("Über Onanismus beim Weibe," Therapeutische Monatshefte,
April, 1890) considered that masturbation in women, leading to a per-
version of sexual feeling, including inability to find satisfaction in coitus,
affects the associated centres. Smith Baker, again ("The Neuropsychical
Element in Conjugal Aversion," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease,
September, 1892), finds that a "source of marital aversion seems to lie
in the fact that substitution of mechanical and iniquitous excitations
affords more thorough satisfaction than the mutual legitimate ones do,"
and gives cases in point. Savill, also, who believes that masturbation
is more common in women than is usually supposed, regards dyspareunia,
or pain in coition, as one of the signs of the habit.

Masturbation in women thus becomes, as Raymond and Janet
point out (Les Obsessions, vol. ii, p. 307) a frequent cause of sexual
frigidity in marriage. These authors illustrate the train of evils which
may thus be set up, by the case of a lady, 26 years of age, a normal
woman, of healthy family, who, at the age of 15, was taught by a ser-
vant to masturbate. At the age of 18 she married. She loved her hus-
band, but she had no sexual feelings in coitus, and she continued to
masturbate, sometimes several times a day, without evil consequences.
At 24 she had to go into a hospital for floating kidney, and was so
obliged to stop masturbating. She here accidentally learnt of the evil
results attributed to the habit. She resolved not to do it again, and
she kept her resolution. But while still in hospital she fell wildly
in love with a man. To escape from the constant thought of this man,
she sought relations with her husband, and at times masturbated, but
now it no longer gave her pleasure. She wished to give up sexual things
altogether. 1 But that was easier said than done. She became subject
to nervous crises, often brought on by the sight of a man, and accom-
panied by sexual excitement. They disappeared under treatment, and
she thereupon became entirely frigid sexually. But, far from being happy, she has lost all energy and interest in life, and it is her sole desire to attain the sexual feelings she has lost. Adler considers that even when masturbation in women becomes an overmastering passion, so far as organic effects are concerned it is usually harmless, its effects being primarily psychic, and he attaches especial significance to it as a cause of sexual anæsthesia in normal coitus, being, perhaps, the most frequent cause of such anaesthesia. He devotes an important chapter to this matter, and brings forward numerous cases in illustration (Adler, *Die Mangelhafte Geschlechtsempfindung des Weibes*, pp. 93-119, also 21-23). Adler considers that the frequency of masturbation in women is largely due to the fact that women experience greater difficulties than men in obtaining sexual satisfaction, and so are impelled by unsatisfying coitus to continue masturbation after marriage. He adds that partly from natural shyness, partly from shame of acknowledging what is commonly accounted a sin, and partly from the fear of seeming disgusting or unworthy of sympathy in the doctor's eyes, women are usually silent on this matter, and very great tact and patience may be necessary before a confession is obtained.

On the psychic side, no doubt, the most frequent and the most characteristic result of persistent and excessive masturbation is a morbid heightening of self-consciousness without any co-ordinated heightening of self-esteem.\(^1\) The man or woman who is kissed by a desirable and desired person of the opposite sex feels a satisfying sense of pride and elation, which must always be absent from the manifestations of auto-erotic activity.\(^2\) This must be so, even apart from the masturbator’s consciousness of the general social attitude toward his practices and his dread

\(^1\) Thus, Bechterew (“La Phobie du Regard,” *Archives de Neurologie*, July, 1905) considers that masturbation plays a large part in producing the morbid fear of the eyes of others.

\(^2\) It is especially an undesirable tendency of masturbation, that it deadens the need for affection, and merely eludes, instead of satisfying, the sexual impulse. “Masturbation,” as Godfrey well says (*The Science of Sex*, p. 178), “though a manifestation of sexual activity, is not a sexual act in the higher, or even in the real fundamental sense. For sex implies duality, a characteristic to which masturbation can plainly lay no claim. The physical, moral, and mental reciprocity which gives stability and beauty to a normal sexual intimacy, are as foreign to the masturbator as to the celibate. In a sense, therefore, masturbation is as complete a negative of the sexual life as chastity itself. "It is, therefore, an evasion of, not an answer to, the sexual problem; and it will ever remain so, no matter how surely we may be convinced of its physical harmlessness.”
of detection, for that may also exist as regards normal coitus without any corresponding psychic effects. The masturbator, if his practice is habitual, is thus compelled to cultivate an artificial consciousness of self-esteem, and may show a tendency to mental arrogance. Self-righteousness and religiosity constitute, as it were, a protection against the tendency to remorse. A morbid mental soil is, of course, required for the full development of these characteristics. The habitual male masturbator, it must be remembered, is often a shy and solitary person; individuals of this temperament are especially predisposed to excesses in all the manifestations of auto-erotism, while the yielding to such tendencies increases the reserve and the horror of society, at the same time producing a certain suspicion of others. In some extreme cases there is, no doubt, as Kraepelin believes, some decrease of psychic capacity, an inability to grasp and co-ordinate external impressions, weakness of memory, deadening of emotions, or else the general phenomena of increased irritability, leading on to neurasthenia.

I find good reason to believe that in many cases the psychic influence of masturbation on women is different from its effect on men. As Spitzka observed, although it may sometimes render women self-reproachful and hesitant, it often seems to make them bold. Boys, as we have seen, early assimilate the tradition that self-abuse is "unmanly" and injurious, but girls have seldom any corresponding tradition that it is "unwomanly," and thus, whether or not they are reticent on the matter, before the forum of their own conscience they are often less ashamed of it than men are and less troubled by remorse.

Eulenburg considers that the comparative absence of bad effects from masturbation in girls is largely due to the fact that, unlike boys, they are not terrorized by exaggerated warnings and quack literature concerning the awful results of the practice. Forel, who has also remarked that women are often comparatively little troubled by qualms of conscience after masturbation, denies that this is due to a lower moral tone than men possess (Forel, *Die Sexuelle Frage*, p. 247). In this connection, I may refer to History IV, recorded in the Appendix to the fifth volume of these *Studies*, in which it is stated that of 55 prostitutes of various nationalities, with whom the subject had had relations,
18 spontaneously told him that they were habitual masturbators, while of 26 normal women, 13 made the same confession, unasked. Gutteit, in Russia, after stating that women of good constitution had told him that they masturbated as much as six or ten times a day or night (until they fell asleep, tired), without bad results, adds that, according to his observations, “masturbation, when not excessive, is, on the whole, a quite innocent matter, which exerts little or no permanent effect,” and adds that it never, in any case, leads to hypochondria onanica in women, because they have not been taught to expect bad results (Dreissig Jahre Praxis, p. 306). There is, I think, some truth—though the exceptions are doubtless many—in the distinction drawn by W. C. Krauss ("Masturbational Neuroses," Medical News, July 13, 1901): "From my experience it [masturbation] seems to have an opposite effect upon the two sexes, dulling the mental and making clumsy the physical exertions of the male, while in the female it quickens and excites the physical and psychical movements. The man is rendered hypoesthetic, the woman hyperesthetic."

In either sex auto-erotic excesses during adolescence in young men and women of intelligence—whatever absence of gross injury there may be—still often produce a certain degree of psychic perversion, and tend to foster false and high-strung ideals of life. Kraepelin refers to the frequency of exalted enthusiasms in masturbators, and I have already quoted Auntie’s remarks on the connection between masturbation and premature false work in literature and art. It may be added that excess in masturbation has often occurred in men and women whose work in literature and art cannot be described as premature and false. K. P. Moritz, in early adult life, gave himself up to excess in masturbation, and up to the age of thirty had no relations with women. Lenau is said—though the statement is sometimes denied—to have been a masturbator from early life, the habit profoundly effecting his life and work. Rousseau, in his Confessions, admirably describes how his own solitary, timid, and imaginative life found its chief sexual satisfaction in masturbation.1 Gogol,

1 "I learnt that dangerous supplement," Rousseau tells us (Part I, Bk. III), "which deceives Nature. This vice, which bashfulness and timidity find so convenient, has, moreover, a great attraction for lively imaginations, for it enables them to do what they will, so to speak, with the whole fair sex, and to enjoy at pleasure the beauty who attracts them, without having obtained her consent."
the great Russian novelist, masturbated to excess, and it has been suggested that the dreamy melancholy thus induced was a factor in his success as a novelist. Goethe, it has been asserted, at one time masturbated to excess; I am not certain on what authority the statement is made, probably on a passage in the seventh book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in which, describing his student-life at Leipzig, and his loss of Aennchen owing to his neglect of her, he tells how he revenged that neglect on his own physical nature by foolish practices from which he thinks he suffered for a considerable period.¹ The great Scandinavian philosopher, Sören Kierkegaard, suffered severely, according to Rasmussen, from excessive masturbation. That, at the present day, eminence in art, literature, and other fields may be combined with the excessive practice of masturbation is a fact of which I have unquestionable evidence.

I have the detailed history of a man of 30, of high ability in a scientific direction, who, except during periods of mental strain, has practiced masturbation nightly (though seldom more than once a night) from early childhood, without any traceable evil results, so far as his general health and energy are concerned. In another case, a schoolteacher, age 30, a hard worker and accomplished musician, has masturbated every night, sometimes more than once a night, ever since he was at school, without, so far as he knows, any bad results; he has never had connection with a woman, and seldom touches wine or tobacco. Curschmann knew a young and able author who, from the age of 11 had masturbated excessively, but who retained physical and mental freshness. It would be very easy to refer to other examples, and I may remark that, as regards the histories recorded in various volumes of these *Studies*, a notable proportion of those in which excessive masturbation is admitted, are of persons of eminent and recognized ability.

¹ "Ich hatte sie wirklich verloren, und die Tollheit, mit der ich meinen Fehler an mir selbst richte, indem ich auf mancherlei unsinnige Weise in meine physische Natur sturzte, um der sittlichen etwas zu Leide zu thun, hat sehr viel zu den körperlichen Übeln beigetragen, unter denen ich einige der besten Jahre meines Lebens verlor; ja ich wäre vielleicht an diesem Verlust völlig zu Grunde gegangen, hätte sich hier nicht das poetische Talent mit seinen Heilkraften besonders hülfreich erwiesen." This is scarcely conclusive, and it may be added that there were many reasons why Goethe should have suffered physically at this time, quite apart from masturbation. See, e.g., Bielschowsky, *Life of Goethe*, vol. i, p. 88.
It is often possible to trace the precise mechanism of the relationship between auto-erotic excitement and intellectual activity. Brown-Séquard, in old age, considered that to induce a certain amount of sexual excitement, not proceeding to emission, was an aid to mental work. Raymond and Janet knew a man considering himself a poet, who, in order to attain the excitation necessary to compose his ideal verses, would write with one hand while with the other he caressed his penis, though not to the extent of producing ejaculation.¹ We must not believe, however, that this is by any means the method of workers who deserve to be accepted seriously; it would be felt, to say the least, as unworthy. It is indeed a method that would only appeal to a person of feeble or failing mental power. What more usually happens is that the auto-erotic excitement develops, pari passu and spontaneously, with the mental activity and at the climax of the latter the auto-erotic excitement also culminates, almost or even quite spontaneously, in an explosion of detumescence which relieves the mental tension. I am acquainted with such cases in both young men and women of intellectual ability, and they probably occur much more frequently than we usually suspect.

In illustration of the foregoing observations, I may quote the following narrative, written by a man of letters: "From puberty to the age of 30 (when I married), I lived in virgin continence, in accord with my principle. During these years I worked exceedingly hard—chiefly at art (music and poetry). My days being spent earning my livelihood, these art studies fell into my evening time. I noticed that productive power came in periods—periods of irregular length, and which certainly, to a partial extent, could be controlled by the will. Such a period of vital power began usually with a sensation of melancholy, and it quickened my normal revolt against the narrowness of conventional life into a red-hot detestation of the paltriness and pettiness with which so many mortals seem to content themselves. As the mood grew in intensity, this scorn of the lower things mixed with and gave place to a vivid insight into higher truths. The oppression began to give place to a realization of the eternity of the heroic things; the fatuities were seen as mere fashions; love was seen as the true lord of life; the eternal romance was evident in its glory; the naked strength and beauty

of men were known despite their clothes. In such mood my work was produced; bitter protest and keen-sighted passion mingled in its building. The arising vitality had certainly deep relation to the periodicity of the sex-force of manhood. At the height of the power of the art-creative mood would come those natural emissions with which Nature calmly disposes of the unused force of the male. Such emissions were natural and healthy, and not exhaustive or hysterical. The process is undoubtedly sane and protective, unless the subject be unhealthy. The period of creative art power extended a little beyond the end of the period of natural seed emission—the art work of this last stage being less vibrant, and of a gentler force. Then followed a time of calm natural rest, which gradually led up to the next sequence of melancholy and power. The periods certainly varied in length of time, controlled somewhat by the force of the mind and the mental will to create; that is to say, I could somewhat delay the natural emission, by which I gained an extension of the period of power."

How far masturbation in moderately healthy persons living without normal sexual relationships may be considered normal is a difficult question only to be decided with reference to individual cases. As a general rule, when only practiced at rare intervals, and faute de mieux, in order to obtain relief for physical oppression and mental obsession, it may be regarded as the often inevitable result of the unnatural circumstances of our civilized social life. When, as often happens in mental degeneracy,—and as in shy and imaginative persons, perhaps of neurotic temperament, may also sometimes become the case,—it is practiced in preference to sexual relationships, it at once becomes abnormal and may possibly lead to a variety of harmful results, mental and physical.¹

It must always be remembered, however, that, while the practice of masturbation may be harmful in its consequences, it is also, in the absence of normal sexual relationships, frequently not without good results. In the medical literature of the last hundred years a number of cases have been incidentally recorded

¹ A somewhat similar classification has already been made by Max Dessoir, who points out that we must distinguish between onanists aus Noth, and onanists aus Leidenschaft, the latter group alone being of really serious importance. The classification of Dallemagne is also somewhat similar; he distinguishes onanie par impulsion, occurring in mental degeneration and in persons of inferior intelligence, from onanie par evocation ou obsession.
in which the patients found masturbation beneficial, and such cases might certainly have been enormously increased if there had been any open-eyed desire to discover them. My own observations agree with those of Sudduth, who asserts that "masturbation is, in the main, practiced for its sedative effect on the nervous system. The relaxation that follows the act constitutes its real attraction. . . . Both masturbation and sexual intercourse should be classed as typical sedatives."¹

Gall (Fonctions du Cerveau, 1825, vol. iii, p. 235) mentioned a woman who was tormented by strong sexual desire, which she satisfied by masturbation ten or twelve times a day; this caused no bad results, and led to the immediate disappearance of a severe pain in the back of the neck, from which she often suffered. Clouston (Mental Diseases, 1887, p. 496) quotes as follows from a letter written by a youth of 22: "I am sure I cannot explain myself, nor give account of such conduct. Sometimes I felt so uneasy at my work that I would go to the water-closet to do it, and it seemed to give me ease, and then I would work like a hatter for a whole week, till the sensation overpowered me again. I have been the most filthy scoundrel in existence," etc. Garnier presents the case of a monk, aged 33, living a chaste life, who wrote the following account of his experiences: "For the past three years, at least, I have felt, every two or three weeks, a kind of fatigue in the penis, or, rather, slight shooting pains, increasing during several days, and then I feel a strong desire to expel the semen. When no nocturnal pollution follows, the retention of the semen causes general disturbance, headache, and sleeplessness. I must confess that, occasionally, to free myself from the general and local oppression, I lie on my stomach and obtain ejaculation. I am at once relieved; a weight seems to be lifted from my chest, and sleep returns." This patient consulted Garnier as to whether this artificial relief was not more dangerous than the sufferings it relieved. Garnier advised that if the ordinary régime of a well-ordered monastery, together with anaphrodisiac sedatives, proved ineffectual.

¹ W. Xavier Sudduth, "A Study in the Psycho-physics of Masturbation." Chicago Medical Recorder, March, 1898. Haig, who reaches a similar conclusion, has sought to find its precise mechanism in the blood-pressure. "As the sexual act produces lower and falling blood-pressure," he remarks, "it will of necessity relieve conditions which are due to high and rising blood-pressure, such, for instance, as mental depression and bad temper; and, unless my observation deceives me, we have here a connection between conditions of high blood-pressure with mental and bodily depression and acts of masturbation, for this act will relieve these conditions and tend to be practiced for this purpose." (Utsc Acts, 6th edition, p. 154.)
cious, the manoeuvre might be continued when necessary (P. Garnier, *Célibat et Célibataires*, 1887, p. 320). H. C. Coe (*American Journal of Obstetrics*, p. 760, July, 1889) gives the case of a married lady who was deeply sensitive of the wrong nature of masturbation, but found in it the only means of relieving the severe ovarian pain, associated with intense sexual excitement, which attended menstruation. During the intermenstrual period the temptation was absent. Turnbull knew a youth who found that masturbation gave great relief to feelings of heaviness and confusion which came on him periodically; and Wigglesworth has frequently seen masturbation after epileptic fits in patients who never masturbated at other times. Moll (*Libido Sexualis*, Bd. I, p. 13) refers to a woman of 28, an artist of nervous and excitable temperament, who could not find sexual satisfaction with her lover, but only when masturbating, which she did once or twice a day, or oftener; without masturbation, she said, she would be in a much more nervous state. A friend tells me of a married lady of 40, separated from her husband on account of incompatibility, who suffered from irregular menstruation; she tried masturbation, and, in her own words, "became normal again;" she had never masturbated previously. I have also been informed of the case of a young unmarried woman, intellectual, athletic, and well developed, who, from the age of seven or eight, has masturbated nearly every night before going to sleep, and would be restless and unable to sleep if she did not.

Judging from my own observations among both sexes, I should say that in normal persons, well past the age of puberty, and otherwise leading a chaste life, masturbation would be little practiced except for the physical and mental relief it brings. Many vigorous and healthy unmarried women or married women apart from their husbands, living a life of sexual abstinence, have asserted emphatically that only by sexually exciting themselves, at intervals, could they escape from a condition of nervous oppression and sexual obsession which they felt to be a state of hysteria. In most cases this happens about the menstrual period, and, whether accomplished as a purely physical act—in the same way as they would soothe a baby to sleep by rocking it or patting it—or by the co-operation of voluptuous mental imagery, the practice is not cultivated for its own sake during the rest of the month.

In illustration of the foregoing statements I will here record a few typical observations of experiences with regard to masturbation. The
cases selected are all women, and are all in a fairly normal, and, for the most part, excellent, state of health; some of them, however, belong to somewhat neurotic families, and these are persons of unusual mental ability and intelligence.

Observation I.—Unmarried, aged 38. She is very vigorous and healthy, of a strongly passionate nature, but never masturbated until a few years ago, when she was made love to by a man who used to kiss her, etc. Although she did not respond to these advances, she was thrown into a state of restless sexual excitement; on one occasion, when in bed in this restless state, she accidentally found, on passing her hand over her body, that, by playing with "a round thing" [clitoris] a pleasurable feeling was produced. She found herself greatly relieved and quieted by these manipulations, though there remained a feeling of tiredness afterward. She has sometimes masturbated six times in a night, especially before and after the menstrual period, until she was unable to produce the orgasm or any feeling of pleasure.

Observation II.—Unmarried, aged 45, of rather nervous temperament. She has for many years been accustomed, usually about a week before the appearance of the menses, to obtain sexual relief by kicking out her legs when lying down. In this way, she says, she obtains complete satisfaction. She never touches herself. On the following day she frequently has pains over the lower part of the abdomen, such pains being apparently muscular and due to the exertion.

Observation III.—Aged 29, recently married, belonging to a neurotic and morbid family, herself healthy, and living usually in the country; vivacious, passionate, enthusiastic, intellectual, and taking a prominent part in philanthropic schemes and municipal affairs; at the same time, fond of society, and very attractive to men. For many years she had been accustomed to excite herself, though she felt it was not good for her. The habit was merely practiced faute de mieux. "I used to sit on the edge of the bed sometimes," she said, "and it came over me so strongly that I simply couldn't resist it. I felt that I should go mad, and I thought it was better to touch myself than be insane. . . . I used to press my clitoris in. . . . It made me very tired afterward—not like being with my husband." The confession was made from a conviction of the importance of the subject, and with the hope that some way might be found out of the difficulties which so often beset women.

Observation IV.—Unmarried, aged 27; possesses much force of character and high intelligence; is actively engaged in a professional career. As a child of seven or eight she began to experience what she describes as lightning-like sensations, "mere, vague, uneasy feelings or momentary twitches, which took place alike in the vulva or the vagina or the uterus, not amounting to an orgasm and nothing like it." These
sensations, it should be added, have continued into adult life. "I always experience them just before menstruation, and afterward for a few days, and, occasionally, though it seems to me not so often, during the period itself. I may have the sensation four or five times during the day; it is not dependent at all upon external impressions, or my own thoughts, and is sometimes absent for days together. It is just one flash, as if you would snap your fingers, and it is over."

As a child, she was, of course, quite unconscious that there was anything sexual in these sensations. They were then usually associated with various imaginary scenes. The one usually indulged in was that a black bear was waiting for her up in a tree, and that she was slowly raised up toward the bear by means of ropes and then lowered again, and raised, feeling afraid of being caught by the bear, and yet having a morbid desire to be caught. In after years she realized that there was a physical sexual cause underlying these imaginations, and that what she liked was a feeling of resistance to the bear giving rise to the physical sensation.

At a somewhat later age, though while still a child, she cherished an ideal passion for a person very much older than herself, this passion absorbing her thoughts for a period of two years, during which, however, there was no progress made in physical sensation. It was when she was nearly thirteen years of age, soon after the appearance of menstruation, and under the influence of this ideal passion, that she first learned to experience conscious orgasm, which was not associated with the thought of any person. "I did not associate it with anything high or beautiful. owing to the fact that I had imbibed our current ideas in regard to sexual feelings, and viewed them in a very poor light indeed." She considers that her sexual feelings were stronger at this period than at any other time in her life. She could, however, often deny herself physical satisfaction for weeks at a time, in order that she might not feel unworthy of the object of her ideal passion. "As for the sexual satisfaction," she writes, "it was experimental. I had heard older girls speak of the pleasure of such feelings, but I was not taught anything by example, or otherwise. I merely rubbed myself with the wash-rag while bathing, waiting for a result, and having the same peculiar feeling I had so often experienced. I am not aware of any ill effects having resulted, but I felt degraded, and tried hard to overcome the habit. No one had spoken to me of the habit, but from the secrecy of grown people, and passages I had heard from the Bible, I conceived the idea that it was a reprehensible practice. And, while this did not curb my desire, it taught me self-control, and I vowed that each time should be the last. I was often able to keep the resolution for two or three weeks." Some four years later she gradually succeeded in breaking herself of the practice in so far as it had become a habit; she has, however, acquired a fuller
knowledge of sexual matters, and, though she has still a great dread of masturbation as a vice, she does not hesitate to relieve her physical feelings when it seems best to her to do so. "I am usually able to direct my thoughts from these sensations," she writes, "but if they seem to make me irritable or wakeful, I relieve myself. It is a physical act, unassociated with deep feeling of any kind. I have always felt that it was a rather unpleasant compromise with my physical nature, but certainly necessary in my case. Yet, I have abstained from gratification for very long periods. If the feeling is not strong at the menstrual period, I go on very well without either the sensation or the gratification until the next period. And, strange as it may seem, the best antidote I have found and the best preventive is to think about spiritual things or someone whom I love. It is simply a matter of training, I suppose,—a sort of mental gymnastics,—which draws the attention away from the physical feelings." This lady has never had any sexual relationships, and, since she is ambitious, and believes that the sexual emotions may be transformed so as to become a source of motive power throughout the whole of life, she wishes to avoid such relationships.

Observation V.—Unmarried, aged 31, in good health, with, however, a somewhat hysterical excess of energy. "When I was about 26 years of age," she writes, "a friend came to me with the confession that for several years she had masturbated, and had become such a slave to the habit that she severely suffered from its ill effects. At that time I had never heard of self-abuse by women. I listened to her story with much sympathy and interest, but some skepticism, and determined to try experiments upon myself, with the idea of getting to understand the matter in order to assist my friend. After some manipulation, I succeeded in awakening what had before been unconscious and unknown. I purposely allowed the habit to grow upon me, and one night—for I always operated upon myself before going to sleep, never in the morning—I obtained considerable pleasurable satisfaction, but the following day my conscience awoke; I also felt pain located at the back of my head and down the spinal column. I ceased my operations for a time, and then began again somewhat regularly, once a month, a few days after menstruation. During those months in which I exercised moderation, I think I obtained much local relief with comparatively little injury, but, later on, finding myself in robust health, I increased my experiments, the habit grew upon me, and it was only with an almost superhuman effort that I broke myself free. Needless to say that I gave no assistance to my suffering friend, nor did I ever refer to the subject after her confession to me.

"Some two years later I heard of sexual practices between women as a frequent habit in certain quarters. I again interested myself in masturbation, for I had been told something that led me to believe that
there was much more for me to discover. Not knowing the most elementary physiology, I questioned some of my friends, and then commenced again. I restricted myself to relief from local congestion and irritation by calling forth the emission of mucus, rather than by seeking pleasure. At the same time, I sought to discover what manipulation of the clitoris would lead to. The habit grew upon me with startling rapidity, and I became more or less its slave, but I suffered from no very great ill effects until I started in search of more discoveries. I found that I was a complete ignoramus as to the formation of a woman’s body, and by experiments upon myself sought to discover the vagina. I continued my operations until I obtained an entrance. I think the rough handling of myself during this final stage disturbed my nervous system, and caused me considerable pain and exhaustion at the back of my head, the spinal column, the back of my eyes, and a general feeling of languor, etc.

“I could not bear to be the slave of a habit, and after much suffering and efforts, which only led to falls to lower depths of conscious failure, my better self rebelled, until, by a great effort and much prayer, I kept myself pure for a whole week. This partial recovery gave me hope, but then I again fell a victim to the habit, much to my chagrin, and became hopeless of ever retracing my steps toward my ideal of virtue. For some days I lost energy, spirit, and hope; my nervous system appeared to be ruined, but I did not really despair of victory in the end. I thought of all the drunkards chained by their intemperate habits, of inveterate smokers who could not exist without tobacco, and of all the various methods by which men were slaves, and the longing to be freed of what had, in my case, proved to be a painful and unnecessary habit, increased daily until, after one night when I struggled with myself for hours, I believed I had finally succeeded.

“At times, when I reached a high degree of sexual excitement, I felt that I was at least one step removed from those of morbid and repressed sex, who had not the slightest suspicion of the latent joys of womanhood within them. For a little while the habit took the shape of an exalted passion, but I rapidly tired it out by rough, thoughtless, and too impatient handling. Revulsion set in with the pain of an exhausted and badly used nervous system, and finding myself the slave of a passion, I determined to endeavor to be its master.

“In conclusion, I should say that masturbation has proved itself to be to me one of the blind turnings of my life’s history, from which I have gained much valuable experience.”

The practice was, however, by no means thus dismissed. Some time later the subject writes: “I have again restarted masturbation for the relief of localized feelings. One morning I was engaged in reading a very heavy volume which, for convenience sake, I held in my lap,
leaning back on my chair. I had become deep in my study for an hour or so when I became aware of certain feelings roused by the weight of the book. Being tempted to see what would happen by such conduct, I shifted so that the edge of the volume came in closer contact. The pleasurable feelings increased, so I gave myself up to my emotions for some thirty minutes.

"Notwithstanding the intense pleasure I enjoyed for so long a period, I maintain that it is wiser to refrain, and, although I admit in the same breath that, by gentle treatment, such pleasure may be harmless to the general health, it does lead to a desire for solitude, which is not conducive to a happy frame of mind. There is an accompanying reticence of speech concerning the pleasure, which, therefore, appears to be unnatural, like the eating of stolen fruit. After such an event, one seems to require to fly to the woods, and to listen to the song of the birds, so as to shake off after-effects."

In a letter dated some months later, she writes: "I think I have risen above the masturbation habit." In the same letter the writer remarks: "If I had consciously abnormal or unsatisfied appetites I would satisfy them in the easiest and least harmful way."

Again, eighteen months later, she writes: "It is curious to note that for months this habit is forgotten, but awakens sometimes to self-assertion. If a feeling of pressure is felt in the head, and a slight irritation elsewhere, and experience shows that the time has come for pacification, exquisite pleasure can be enjoyed, never more than twice a month, and sometimes less often."

Observation VI.—Unmarried, actively engaged in the practice of her profession. Well-developed, feminine in contour, but boyish in manner and movements; strong, though muscles small, and healthy, with sound nervous system; never had anaemia. Thick brown hair; pubic hair thick, and hair on toes and legs up to umbilicus; it began to appear at the age of 10 (before pubic hair) and continued until 18. A few stray hairs round nipples, and much dark down on upper lip, as well as light down on arms and hands. Hips, normal; nates, small; labia minora, large; and clitoris, deeply hooded. Hymen thick, vagina, probably small. Considerable pigmentation of parts. Menstruation began at 15, but not regular till 17; is painless and scanty; the better the state of health, the less it is. No change of sexual or other feelings connected with it; it lasts one to three days.

"I believe," she writes, "my first experience of physical sex sensations was when I was about 16, and in sleep. But I did not then recognize it, and seldom, indeed, gave the subject of sex a thought. I was a child far beyond the age of childhood. The accompanying dreams were disagreeable, but I cannot remember what they were about. It was not until I was nearly 19 that I knew the sexual orgasm in my
waking state. It surprised me completely, but I knew that I had known it before in my sleep.

"The knowledge came one summer when I was leading a rather isolat

ed life, and my mind was far from sex subjects, being deep in

books, Carlyle, Ruskin, Huxley, Darwin, Scott, etc. I noticed that when I got up in the morning I felt very hot and uncomfortable. The clitoris and the parts around were swollen and erect, and often tender and painful. I had no idea what it was, but found I was unable to pass my water for an hour or two. One day, when I was straining a little to pass water, the full orgasm occurred. The next time it happened, I tried to check it by holding myself firmly, of course, with the opposite result. I do not know that I found it highly pleasurable, but it was a very great relief. I allowed myself a good many experiments, to come to a conclusion in the matter, and I thought about it. I was much too shy to speak to any one, and thought it was probably a sin. I tried not to do it, and not to think about it, saying to myself that surely I was lord of my body. But I found that the matter was not entirely under my control. However unwilling or passive I might be, there were times when the involuntary discomfort was not in my keep-

ing. My touching myself or not did not save me from it. Because it sometimes gave me pleasure, I thought it might be a form of self-

indulgence, and did not do it until it could scarcely be helped. Soon the orgasm began to occur fairly frequently in my sleep, perhaps once or twice a week. I had no erotic dreams, then or at any other time, but I had nights of restless sleep, and woke as it occurred, dreaming that it was happening, as, in fact, it was. At times I hardly awoke, but went to sleep again in a moment. I continued for two or three years to be sorely tried by day at frequent intervals. I acquired a remarkable degree of control, so that, though one touch or steadily di-

rected thought would have caused the orgasm, I could keep it off, and go to sleep without 'wrong doing.' Of course, when I fell asleep, my control ended. All this gave me a good deal of physical worry, and kept my attention unwillingly fixed upon the matter. I do not think my body was readily irritable, but I had unquestionably very strong sexual impulses.

"After a year or two, when I was working hard, I could not afford the attention the control cost me, or the prolonged mitigated sexual excitement it caused." I took drugs for a time, but they lost effect, produced lassitude, and agreed with me badly. I therefore put away my scruples and determined to try the effect of giving myself an instan
t and business-like relief. Instead of allowing my feelings to gather strength, I satisfied them out of hand. Instead of five hours of heat and discomfort, I did not allow myself five minutes, if I could help it.
"The effect was marvelous. I practically had no more trouble. The thing rarely came to me at all by day, and though it continued at times by night, it became less frequent and less strong; often it did not wake me. The erotic images and speculations that had begun to come to me died down. I left off being afraid of my feelings, or, indeed, thinking about them. I may say that I had decided that I should be obliged to lead a single life, and that the less I thought about matters of sex, the more easy I should find life. Later on I had religious ideas which helped me considerably in my ideals of a decent, orderly, self-contained life. I do not lay stress on these; they were not at all emotional, and my physical and psychical development do not appear to have run much on parallel lines. I had a strong moral sense before I had a religious one, and a 'common-sense' which I perhaps trusted more than either.

"When I was about 28 I thought I might perhaps leave off the habit of regular relief I had got into. (It was not regular as regards time, being anything from one day to six weeks.) The change was probably made easier by a severe illness I had had. I gave this abstinence a fair trial for several years (until I was about 34), but my nocturnal manifestations certainly gathered strength, especially when I got much better in health, and, finally, as at puberty, began to worry my waking life. I reasoned that by my attempt at abstinence I had only exchanged control for uncontrol, and reverted to my old habits of relief, with the same good results as before. The whole trouble subsided and I got better at once. (The orgasm during sleep continued, and occurs about once a fortnight; it is increased by change of air, especially at the seaside, when it may occur on two or three nights running.) I decided that, for the proper control of my single life, relief was normal and right. It would be very difficult for anyone to demonstrate the contrary to me. My aim has always been to keep myself in the best condition of physical and mental balance that a single person is capable of."

There is some interest in briefly reviewing the remarkable transformations in the attitude toward masturbation from Greek times down to our own day. The Greeks treated masturbation with little opprobrium. At the worst they regarded it as unmanly, and Aristophanes, in various passages, connects the practice with women, children, slaves, and feeble old men. Æschines seems to have publicly brought it as a charge against Demosthenes that he had practiced masturbation, though, on the other hand, Plutarch tells us that Diogenes—described by Zeller, the
historian of Greek philosophy, as "the most typical figure of ancient Greece"—was praised by Chrysippus, the famous philosopher, for masturbating in the market-place. The more strenuous Romans, at all events as exemplified by Juvenal and Martial, condemned masturbation more vigorously. Aretæus, without alluding to masturbation, dwells on the tonic effects of retaining the semen; but, on the other hand, Galen regarded the retention of semen as injurious, and advocated its frequent expulsion, a point of view which tended to justify masturbation. In classical days, doubtless, masturbation and all other forms of the autoerotic impulse were comparatively rare. So much scope was allowed in early adult age for homosexual and later for heterosexual relationships that any excessive or morbid development of solitary self-indulgence could seldom occur. The case was altered when Christian ideals became prominent. Christian morality strongly proscribed sexual relationships except under certain specified conditions. It is true that Christianity discouraged all sexual manifestations, and that therefore its ban fell equally on masturbation, but, obviously, masturbation lay at the weakest line of defence against the assaults of the flesh; it was there that resistance would most readily yield. Christianity thus probably led to a considerable increase of masturbation. The attention which the theologians devoted to its manifestations clearly bears witness to their magnitude. It is noteworthy that Mohammedan theologians regarded masturbation as a Christian vice. In Islam both doctrine and practice tended to encourage sexual relationships, and not much attention was paid to masturbation, nor even any severe reprobation directed against it. Omer Haleby remarks that certain theologians of Islam are inclined to consider the practice of masturbation in vogue among Christians as allowable to devout Mussulmans when alone on a journey; he himself regards this as a practice good neither for soul nor body (seminal emissions during sleep providing all necessary relief); should, however, a Mussulman fall into this error, God is merciful!

1 Northcote discusses the classic attitude towards masturbation, *Christianity and Sex Problems*, p. 233.

In Theodore's Penitential of the seventh century, forty days' penance is prescribed for masturbation. Aquinas condemned masturbation as worse than fornication, though less heinous than other sexual offences against Nature; in opposition, also, to those who believed that *distillatio* usually takes place without pleasure, he observed that it was often caused by sexual emotion, and should, therefore, always be mentioned to the confessor. Liguori also regarded masturbation as a graver sin than fornication, and even said that *distillatio*, if voluntary and with notable physical commotion, is without doubt a mortal sin, for in such a case it is the beginning of a pollution. On the other hand, some theologians have thought that *distillatio* may be permitted, even if there is some commotion, so long as it has not been voluntarily procured, and Caramuel, who has been described as a theological *enfant terrible*, declared that "natural law does not forbid masturbation," but that proposition was condemned by Innocent XI. The most enlightened modern Catholic view is probably represented by Debreyne, who, after remarking that he has known pious and intelligent persons who had an irresistible impulse to masturbate, continues: "Must we excuse, or condemn, these people? Neither the one nor the other. If you condemn and repulse absolutely these persons as altogether guilty, against their own convictions, you will perhaps throw them into despair; if, on the contrary, you completely excuse them, you maintain them in a disorder from which they may, perhaps, never emerge. Adopt a wise middle course, and, perhaps, with God's aid, you may often cure them."

Under certain circumstances some Catholic theologians have permitted a married woman to masturbate. Thus, the Jesuit theologian, Gury, asserts that the wife does not sin "*quae se ipsam tactibus excitat ad seminationem statim post copulam in quod vir solus seminavit.*" This teaching seems to have been misunderstood, since ethical and even medical writers have expended a certain amount of moral indignation on the Church whose theologians committed themselves to this statement. As a matter of fact, this qualified permission to masturbate merely rests on a false theory of procreation, which is clearly expressed in the word *seminatio*. It was believed that ejaculation in the woman is as necessary to fecundation as ejaculation in the man. Galen, Avicenna, and Aquinas recognized, indeed, that such feminine semination was not necessary; Sanchez, however, was doubtful, while Suarez and Zacchia, following Hippocrates, regarded it as necessary. As sexual intercourse without fecundation is not approved by the Catholic Church, it thus became logically necessary to permit women to masturbate whenever the ejaculation of mucus had not occurred at or before coitus.

The belief that the emission of vaginal mucus, under the influence of sexual excitement in women, corresponded to spermatic emission, has led to the practice of masturbation on hygienic grounds. Garnier
Célibat, p. 255) mentions that Mesue, in the eighteenth century, invented a special pessary to take the place of the penis, and, as he stated, effect the due expulsion of the feminine sperm.

Protestantism, no doubt, in the main accepted the general Catholic tradition, but the tendency of Protestantism, in reaction against the minute inquisition of the earlier theologians, has always been to exercise a certain degree of what it regarded as wholesome indifference toward the less obvious manifestations of the flesh. Thus in Protestant countries masturbation seems to have been almost ignored until Tissot, combining with his reputation as a physician the fanaticism of a devout believer, raised masturbation to the position of a colossal bogey which during a hundred years has not only had an unfortunate influence on medical opinion in these matters, but has been productive of incalculable harm to ignorant youth and tender consciences. During the past forty years the efforts of many distinguished physicians—a few of whose opinions I have already quoted—have gradually dragged the bogey down from its pedestal, and now, as I have ventured to suggest, there is a tendency for the reaction to be excessive. There is even a tendency to-day to regard masturbation, with various qualifications, as normal. Remy de Gourmont, for instance, considers that masturbation is natural because it is the method by which fishes procreate: “All things considered, it must be accepted that masturbation is part of the doings of Nature. A different conclusion might be agreeable, but in every ocean and under the reeds of every river, myriads of beings would protest.”

Tillier remarks that since masturbation appears to be universal among the higher animals we are not entitled to regard it as a vice; it has only been so considered because studied exclusively by physicians under abnormal conditions. Hirth, while asserting that masturbation must be strongly repressed in the young, regards it as a desirable method of relief for adults, and especially, under some circumstances, for women. Venturi, a well-known Italian alienist, on the other

1 Remy de Gourmont, Physique de l'Amour, p. 133.
3 G. Hirth, Wege zur Heimat, p. 648.
hand, regards masturbation as strictly physiological in youth; it is the normal and natural passage toward the generous and healthy passion of early manhood; it only becomes abnormal and vicious, he holds, when continued into adult life.

The appearance of masturbation at puberty, Venturi considers, "is a moment in the course of the development of the function of that organ which is the necessary instrument of sexuality." It finds its motive in the satisfaction of an organic need having much analogy with that which arises from the tickling of a very sensitive cutaneous surface. In this masturbation of early adolescence lies, according to Venturi, the germ of what will later be love: a pleasure of the body and of the spirit, following the relief of a satisfied need. "As the youth develops, onanism becomes a sexual act comparable to coitus as a dream is comparable to reality, imagery forming in correspondence with the desires. In its fully developed form in adolescence," Venturi continues, "masturbation has an almost hallucinatory character; onanism at this period psychically approximates to the true sexual act, and passes insensibly into it. If, however, continued on into adult age, it becomes morbid, passing into erotic fetishism; what in the inexperienced youth is the natural auxiliary and stimulus to imagination, in the degenerate onanist of adult age is a sign of arrested development. Thus, onanism," the author concludes, "is not always a vice such as is fiercely combated by educators and moralists. It is the natural transition by which we reach the warm and generous love of youth, and, in natural succession to this, the tranquil, positive, matrimonial love of the mature man." (Silvio Venturi, _Le Degenerazioni Psico-sessuale_, 1892, pp. 6-9.)

It may be questioned whether this view is acceptable even for the warm climate of the south of Europe, where the impulses of sexuality are undoubtedly precocious. It is certainly not in harmony with general experience and opinion in the north; this is well expressed in the following passage by Edvard Carpenter (International Journal of Ethics, July. 1899): "After all, purity (in the sense of continence) is of the first importance to boyhood. To prolong the period of continence in a boy's life is to prolong the period of growth. This is a simple physiological law, and a very obvious one; and, whatever other things may be said in favor of purity, it remains, perhaps, the most weighty. To introduce sensual and sexual habits—and one of the worst of them is self-abuse—at an early age, is to arrest growth, both physical and mental. And what is even more, it means to arrest the capacity for affection. All experience shows that the early outlet toward sex cheapens and weakens affectional capacity."
I do not consider that we can decide the precise degree in which masturbation may fairly be called normal so long as we take masturbation by itself. We are thus, in conclusion, brought back to the point which I sought to emphasize at the outset: masturbation belongs to a group of auto-erotic phenomena. From one point of view it may be said that all auto-erotic phenomena are unnatural, since the natural aim of the sexual impulse is sexual conjunction, and all exercise of that impulse outside such conjunction is away from the end of Nature. But we do not live in a state of Nature which answers to such demands; all our life is "unnatural." And as soon as we begin to restrain the free play of sexual impulse toward sexual ends, at once auto-erotic phenomena inevitably spring up on every side. There is no end to them; it is impossible to say what finest elements in art, in morals, in civilization generally, may not really be rooted in an auto-erotic impulse. "Without a certain overheating of the sexual system," said Nietzsche, "we could not have a Raphael." Auto-erotic phenomena are inevitable. It is our wisest course to recognize this inevitableness of sexual and transmuted sexual manifestations under the perpetual restraints of civilized life, and, while avoiding any attitude of excessive indulgence or indifference, to avoid also any attitude of excessive horror, for our horror not only leads to the facts being effectually veiled from our sight, but itself serves to manufacture artificially a greater evil than that which we seek to combat.

The sexual impulse is not, as some have imagined, the sole root of the most massive human emotions, the most brilliant human aptitudes,—of sympathy, of art, of religion. In the complex human organism, where all the parts are so many-fibred and so closely interwoven, no great manifestation can be reduced to one single source. But it largely enters into and molds all of these emotions and aptitudes, and that by virtue of its two most peculiar characteristics: it is, in the first place, the deepest and

1 Féro, in the course of his valuable work, L'Instinct Sexuel, stated that my conclusion is that masturbation is normal, and that "l'indulgence s'impose." I had, however, already guarded myself against this misinterpretation.
most volcanic of human impulses, and, in the second place,—unlike the only other human impulse with which it can be compared, the nutritive impulse,—it can, to a large extent, be transmuted into a new force capable of the strangest and most various uses. So that in the presence of all these manifestations we may assert that in a real sense, though subtly mingled with very diverse elements, auto-erotism everywhere plays its part. In the phenomena of auto-erotism, when we take a broad view of those phenomena, we are concerned, not with a form of insanity, not necessarily with a form of depravity, but with the inevitable by-products of that mighty process on which the animal creation rests.