

AN  
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

*Nasturbation*

SUBMITTED TO THE  
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I shall not pause to consider, whether or not this form of self pollution demands the attention of the medical man; but will launch my bark into waters where wiser heads, would at once decide too dangerous for as small a craft, so poorly manied, to ride in safety.

Man was made to conform to the laws of nature, and however well developed his moral faculties may be, and though he may be circumspect in his character and righteous, in the sight of man; yet though the acknowledgement may humble the mind, we are compelled to acknowledge, that man unshackled by man, and unrestrained by Divine influences, is a brute by nature! To properly understand the being the world calls a man, we must study him in publick life; but to inform ourselves

as to the true character of him whom morality, virtue, and religion, calls a man, we must scan his private walks, follow him to his alcove, when secluded from the refining eye of the publick, nature arouses the animal passions within him, and tries his very soul as if by fire.

Here virtue demands purity of thought and action, while vice invents a thousand visionary schemes to lead his mind astray from the path of rectitude.

Onanism, Masturbation or self pollution, is the elysium of the recluse. This crime is always committed in secret, for its degradation is too great for the eyes of man to behold, and so watchful and cautious is the masturbator, that he is rarely caught in the act of perpetrating the outrage. Of the primary

effects of Onanism on the constitution of the Masturbator, I am totally ignorant, not having gratified an amorous propensity to taste all the sweets of life.

Sexual intercourse when indulged in to too great an extent, produces enervation of mind and body, all the intellectual faculties are weakened, he becomes a coward, apprehensive of a thousand ideal dangers; or sinks into the effeminate timidity of a woman, it debilitates the constitution and renders the individual a fit subject for disease to prey upon.

The first noticeable effects of Onanism is made upon the constitution of the polluted being.

His flesh gradually diminishes and with it nervous power suffers a



proportionable diminution; his face  
 becomes pale, his eyes lose their lustre and  
 vivacity, and he is rendered incapable  
 of withstanding the prying gaze of  
 any one. He feels that he is degraded,  
 and with dejected countenance fixes  
 his eyes on his mother earth, and  
 fign would stalk away in caves  
 and dens, suspiciously avoiding  
 the eyes of man. Having rendered  
 himself independent of a companion  
 and associate, he contemns mankind  
 at large, and believing that his bosom  
 secret is revealed, believes he is in  
 return abhorred. His mind gradually  
 diminishes in strength and activity,  
 his thoughts become evanescent and ut-  
 -ately his sensual appetite becomes  
 the theme of daily thoughts, and nightly

dreams, until the features which had distinguished him from the brute that perishes, are defaced, and the vile instrument is left a mere automaton.

In connection with the ability which pervades both mind and body, we have as the result a pathological condition of the sanguiferous and nervous system, together with diseases of the prostate gland, and neck of the bladder; also perversion of action of all the functions of the body. After the habit is once fixed, the subject gives himself up to a life of sensuality and libertinism, not having the will or moral courage to extricate himself from the tide which is bearing him onward to the vortex of ruin. Those who have contracted

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the pernicious habit of Masturbation permit  
no obstacle, to thwart their hellish desires,  
which can be overcome, short of death.  
They will ever sacrifice themselves on  
the altar of concupiscence!

Richardson in his physiology gives  
the case of a shepherd boy who had  
addicted himself to this kind of  
pollution, until it became second  
nature with him, constant seclusion  
from the world favouring his desires  
he had recurred to this form of  
pleasurable excitement, until worn  
nature would no longer yield to  
the excitement of external friction;  
and this caused his meagre mind  
to invent a means of exciting nature  
to crown his efforts with success; his  
ideal of perfection, he resorted to

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intra urethral titillation by means of a small stick. This invention answered his purpose for a while, but the mucous membrane becoming obtunded in sensibility, and callous in structure, he was again thwarted in his efforts. He then split his penis to the root and was gratified to find that by slight titillation with his favourite stick, a bounteous flow resulted, which was the palladium of his hope. Thus he lecherously vented by desecrating his body until he unluckily happened to crop his stick into his bladder, just I imagine as his whole frame was quivering with pleasures delectable. In despair unutterable he presented himself to a surgeon and communicated his sad story.

Why is it that man will accustom himself



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to a habit so degrading to the mind, and so pernicious to the body? We must look to the physiology of the genital organs, for a solution of the problem.

There is a law of physiology which ordains that every secretion shall have means of excretion, and hence every gland which has for its office, the preparation of a material or fluid, has also a duct communicating with it through which this material may be transmitted from the gland to the destination appointed by God.

It is then a law of nature that the seminal secretion shall have an appropriate channel for excretion, and a natural means for exciting the secretion, and it is as necessary to the maintenance of perfect health as

vigor of mind and body as is the  
 excretion of bile, saliva, urine or any  
 of the other secretions. It is not only  
 necessary to the preservation of health  
 that the seminal fluid should be  
 excreted, but it is the next thing  
 to an impossibility to retain the  
 secretions while its secretory duct  
 remains pervious. And if a  
 fine continent man do proclaim  
 that it is possible to remain  
 as chaste as a virgin and free  
 from casualty, yet they are candid  
 enough to acknowledge, that it  
 is a little pentup hell unsavouring  
 the better faculties of the mind  
 to invent means by which honorable  
 gratification may be secured.

Urine may be retained in the bladder

and feces in the rectum <sup>longer</sup> than nature demands, and so he may retain semen in its proper receptaculum, but it is like damming up an established water course, in its channel, it will certainly accumulate force and overleap every barrier and envelope the unconscious sleeper in its resistless flood. Nature demands it and there must be a proper stimulus supplied, or else the accumulation will so stimulate the parts as to produce a seminal emission without volition. Nocturnal emissions are equally as injurious as Masturbation and perhaps more so. The latter can be controlled by the volition but the former depends on a pathological condition and occurs when

the subject is in the arms of Morpheus, or imaginatively in the arms of his delirium. The confirmed nocturnal emissionist is if possible in a more precarious situation than the confirmed masturbator at least the former deserves more commiseration than the latter.

Knowing that nature has established the secretion of semen and knowing as all candid men do that this secretion must, will and does have its periods of exertion, would it not be best for men like rational beings to gratify their passions in a humane and honorable way, than to suffer themselves to be lead into pernicious habits which will surely wreck



their constitutions, and render their minds useless and powerless! It is strange that this subject has received so little attention from men who have undertaken the arduous task of preventing and curing disease by recording their experience. The diseases which have their origin in Onanism are only obscure, because they have been intentionally neglected. That Masturbation is a cause of disease is now reduced to a certainty, and I am firmly convinced that it is not an uncommon cause.

Every observing man can call to remembrance youthful companions who were affected with pains in the

back, vague pains in the head, general lassitude, impaired digestion and incapability of fixing his mind upon his studies; with gradual loss of flesh. These interesting youths may be found at all places of learning, for young men and the history of their disease together with the cause, may be learned by applying to their bedfellows. I was so fortunate as to have one of these libidinous youths for a room mate a few years ago; and to him I owe what little knowledge I have on this subject, and being somewhat of a utilitarian I am now attempting to realise benefit from what was to me a source of great annoyance

not to say disgust. Poor L- became  
addicted to this baneful practice when  
he was quite a youth and followed  
it sedulously for two years to my  
knowledge. He became very much  
emaciated and lost what little energy  
he had in the beginning - He suffered  
almost constantly with a dull, heavy  
pain in his head. He became pale  
and somewhat livid and his large  
white hands pined that they had  
been soaked in warm water for  
twelve months. His eyes became  
dull, heavy and sunken, and a livid  
spot could most always be seen  
beneath each eye. His good Doctor  
often wearied himself and scratched  
his head to no effect, in his attempt  
to solve the mystery connected with L-'s disease

He tried salvarsan, tonics and a host of medicines, and advised cessation from mental labour but all to no effect; it is true the patient would get better, but then he would get worse again and so matters stood throughout the two years; and then I lost sight of him until about four years after we parted at school.

I met my old bedfellow at a publick place on a publick day, and was astonished to find him not only alive but looking well. He informed me that he had been married three years, and that he had a fine boy about eighteen months old. The latter disclosure astounded me, for I was sure that his procreative functions were entirely lost long before



he was married. This horrible practice I am sorry to say is not confined to young men although the proofs of its occurrence in the other sex is with more difficulty established.

Our insane hospitals present many cases of habitual masturbation occurring in the females, and I think we might with difficulty find a great number of cases of insanity which had their origin in Onanism.

The Physician is never called on to administer to patients addicted to this practice until it has made deep inroads on the constitution, and though the plan of treatment may be simple, yet the task is Herculean.

The first step is to get the consent of the patient to take his body perfectly under control. In the day he should

have a vigilant, cautious nurse who should not lose sight of his charge for a single moment. At night the patients arms should be pinioned to his sides.

Without these important steps being taken, it is useless to attempt any constitutional treatment; but after they have been put in force then each symptom of constitutional derangement should be summed up, and appropriate treatment adopted to regenerate the shattered constitution.

The Physician must know in the outset that the patients word cannot be relied on for the fulfillment of a promise. It seems that one of the symptoms of the disease is an inordinate propensity to lie and the extraction of a promise is therefore useless.

As soon as the patients health will admit  
of it, he should be advised to marry,  
for after all that is the only reliance  
for a permanent cure.

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