

and constitutes a real state of disease. Priapism is not always accompanied by pleasurable feelings, though it usually is, but, on the contrary, it is sometimes painful. In some persons it comes on suddenly, without any premonitory symptoms whatever, but in others it commences gradually, and is frequently indicated by a sense of fullness in the testes, or of pain and heaviness in the head. The patient is utterly unable to control the erection in the slightest degree, nor in general can he by any means prevent it, while the morbid state continues. I have known men who always suffered from this immediately they went to bed, so that their rest was much disturbed. In one young man, especially, the health suffered seriously. Every night, when he had been in bed about an hour, the priapism would commence, and such was the effect on his nervous system that sleep was out of the question while it continued. Very often, for several nights together, he did not sleep more than a single hour, and yet there was in general but little sexual feeling, and that only at first, the sensation afterward being merely one of intense and harrowing excitement. The next day he suffered from headache, pain and weakness in the back, and soreness in the organ itself. In no instance did he have emissions during these attacks, and this is a peculiarity I have frequently observed.

The causes of this troublesome affection may be various, and sometimes can only be surmised. In many cases, especially among young persons in vigorous health and of perfect development, it results from an actual excess of semen, which first causes *spermatocele*, and then leads to a chronic inflammatory condition, by which the erection is constantly excited. This condition may exist in those who are not at all disposed to lascivious thoughts, and even in those who are constantly striving against them, though it is of course made much worse by indulging such thoughts. Most commonly in these persons the priapism continues till an involuntary emission takes place, and then it disappears for a short time, till the semen has again accumulated in too great quantity. There are some, however, in whom these emissions never occur, and in them the priapism is frequently a *constant state*, and becomes eventually a real disease. In the early stages *marriage* is, of course, the only certain and effectual remedy, though much mitigation may be effected by means that will hereafter be pointed out; but when the organs have become diseased or chronically inflamed, marriage would be highly improper till a healthy condition is restored.

It is not always the case, however, that priapism results from seminal accumulation, or superabundant energy, for it is sometimes experienced by those that are rather deficient, or, at least, below the average. I have even observed it in those that were nearly sterile. In these cases it is induced by a diseased condition of the brain, and is usually considered a mere moral affection, though, like many other moral affections, it is simply an indication and consequence of physical disease. In this state there is constant desire at first, sometimes amounting to furious *erotomania*, but eventually all feeling and desire will vanish, while the priapism will remain, and sometimes even continue after death. Long-continued debauchery is also sometimes followed by obstinate priapism, and eventually by absolute impotency. In the *Medical Repository* for April, 1824, is a case of this kind communicated by Mr. Callaway. The patient, during a fit of intoxication, associated with a female three times in succession, having emissions each time, but no subsidence of the erection, a circumstance which I have often known to occur during intoxication. To his great surprise the erection still continued the next morning, and it remained for sixteen days, in spite of all the means used to reduce it. The surgeon then made an incision with

the lancet, just below the scrotum, and immediately there escaped a large quantity of thick black blood, mixed with clots. On pressing the penis the blood all flowed out of it, by the opening, and it immediately became flaccid. The man was impotent, however, afterward, for no erection ever took place again, owing probably to the cells of the corpus cavernosum and corpus spongiosum having grown up, from inflammation. The continued erection was apparently owing, in this case, to inflammation at the lower part of the penis, or in the perineal muscles, which caused the veins to be so pressed upon that the blood could not return by them, or perhaps the veins themselves were swollen and closed up. Some men have brought on a similar condition of the parts by keeping themselves too long excited, without allowing emission to take place, a practice which is very reprehensible, and which not unfrequently causes spermatocele, or even orchitis.

If the erection be too powerful, or too long continued, it will often cause temporary impotence, by so compressing the urethra that the semen cannot traverse along it. When this occurs the semen either escapes afterward, slowly, or else mixes with the urine.

Long-continued priapism is always hurtful, and is very likely to destroy the power of erection altogether, ultimately; it is, therefore, desirable that we should know its various causes, and the best means of treating it. Persons who are not properly informed respecting its nature are apt to consider it as simply a result of loose thoughts, and that only a proper effort is required to overcome it. This is a great mistake, as we have already shown, and one which leads both to the neglect of proper treatment and also to uncharitable judgments.

In addition to the general causes of this affection, already enumerated, there are also several others that have a tendency, more or less, to originate or aggravate it. Want of proper cleanliness, hot clothing, particularly if it chafes, and the too frequent use of warm baths may be mentioned, and also several other diseases, such as gonorrhœa and spermatorrhœa. The gravel, and inflammation of the bladder also excite the penis very much in some persons, and the piles will do the same in others. Stimulating and highly-seasoned food, and hot or vinous drinks have the same tendency, and sleeping in a very warm soft bed is apt to assist. The use of bougies and injections will often produce priapism, and certain medicines still more frequently. Cantharides, phosphorus, and opium, perhaps act the most energetically in this way, but there are others whose effects are very decided, and they all act very differently at times, and upon different persons. The reading of lascivious books, or listening to loose conversation, undoubtedly operates in a similar manner to these physical agents, and the indulgence of lying in bed of a morning, half awake, has the same tendency.

The treatment of priapism must of course be regulated by the cause that produces or aggravates it. When it is mainly produced by neglect of properly regulating the mind, or controlling the desires, the cure must depend entirely upon the individual's own self, or rather upon his strength of mind. When it arises from a too stimulating diet and drink, aided by a deficiency of muscular exercise, which is very often the case in young persons, nothing more is required than to live low, drink cold water, keep the bowels free, and bathe the parts frequently with cold water. If there be a too great secretion of semen, with no sufficient involuntary discharge, marriage is indicated. If there be any other disease, it must first be cured, and if there be heat and pain in the head, particularly in the back part, it

must be frequently bathed in cold water, and kept cool, precisely the same as for inflammation of the brain, of which in fact the priapism is often only a symptom. During the paroxysm the parts may be bathed with warm water, or a warm enema may be given. Sitting in a warm bath is sometimes the best plan, or over hot steam. In obstinate cases leeches may be applied to the penis, or a vein may be opened in it, but one of the best remedies is to give sufficient *tartar emetic* to cause sickness; this generally relieves the priapism. Two ordinary sized pills of gum camphor have been found efficacious in some persons, and simple fasting, till faintness ensued, in others. When the paroxysm is over, strict attention must be paid to the diet, clothing and general conduct, as before indicated, to prevent a recurrence.

I have had some patients with whom I have had to use various mechanical contrivances, to prevent the priapism occurring at night, or while the curative means were being employed. A simple bandage, drawn tightly round the organ when flaccid, will often prevent the erection, but a better plan is to use two grooved pieces of wood, one of which must be placed above the penis and the other below so that they can be drawn together by a band, or screw. The organ can be compressed so tightly by this machine, while in its ordinary state, that erection cannot possibly take place. Several of my patients were unable to sleep till provided with an instrument of this kind.

The longest period I ever knew an attack of priapism to last was *six weeks*, and that was in a married man. It first began during a short absence from home, and was kept up by the impossibility which he experienced, on his return, of discharging the semen, owing to the swollen and inflamed state of the parts. He suffered from spermatocele, and slightly from orchitis, and was further troubled by violent desire, which he was unable to gratify. Connection was possible, but without emission, and consequently without gratification. I was much afraid, from the violence of the attack, and from the symptoms, that permanent impotence would follow, but by careful treatment, perseveringly attended to, he completely recovered.

I knew one instance in which priapism followed a blow on the head, from which the person died, and it remained after his death, the parts being so firmly congested, and so rigid, that nothing had any effect upon them. In several instances I have known priapism follow the application of blisters to the neck and back, even in *young children*, a fact that should not be lost sight of, either by physicians or parents.

DISEASES OF THE URETHRA AND THE PARTS CONTAINED THEREIN.

The urethra, as before explained, is a long canal passing from the bladder down the penis, for the purpose of conveying the urine out of the body, and also for conducting the semen, it being the common passage for both fluids.

The membranous walls of the urethra are rather thick, and are elastic, and the interior is lined with a mucous coat similar to that inside the bladder. The size of the urethra is different in different parts; thus a little way in from the external opening, or *meatus urinarius*, it expands considerably, and then contracting again expands still larger at about two-thirds of its length down. The substance of which the walls of the urethra are composed appears not to be the same in its whole length, being membranous in some parts and in others *spongy*, almost like the corpus spongiosum. It therefore participates in the act of erection, and its concurrence is very essential to the proper emission of the semen. Where it first opens at the neck of

the bladder it is wide, but drawn together by certain muscles, excepting when the urine is evacuated, when the muscles relax and allow it to open. It is not by the drawing together of the walls of the urethra alone, however, that the urine is prevented from escaping, but partly by the presence of the *veru montanum*. By referring to the plate of the situation of the male organs, the position of this part will be readily understood. It is a small fleshy protuberance, placed on the lower wall of the urethra, just where it opens from the bladder. In shape it is like a cone, with the small end pointing toward the end of the penis. The neck of the bladder closes around this little protuberance while the urine is retained, but during evacuation it relaxes and opens a little, and the fluid then passes on each side of the montanum, which thus acts a similar part to the stopper of a bottle. Many cases of incontinence of urine arise from irritation of the *veru montanum*, which becomes so tender that the neck of the bladder is kept constantly open to prevent pressure upon it. This irritation may arise from various causes, but most usually we can only guess what they are. The mode of subduing it is simply to use general means for subduing inflammation, such as are suitable for all the neighboring parts. An irritating quality of the urine is very apt to give rise to it, particularly when very acid, and then it is readily corrected by taking a little *carbonate of soda* every morning before breakfast, and drinking freely of gum-arabic water. I had one patient who suffered terribly from this cause, without knowing, till explained to him, what it was. Immediately the smallest portion of urine was secreted in the bladder it felt as if a piece of red-hot iron was placed in the neck, and all command over it was instantly lost, the urine escaping in spite of all his efforts. The smarting, burning, and pricking sensation he described as most horribly torturing, without there being any apparent possibility of relief. He had been told by some practitioner that it was stone in the bladder, but I felt assured, after careful examination, that it was inflammation of the *veru montanum*, and advised him accordingly. I prescribed hot fomentations of poppy heads, on the pubes and perineum, with leeches also on the perineum, and inside the thighs. Internally I directed him to take the following powders, with a dose of castor oil every evening, and to drink plentifully during the day of barley water:

R. Dried leaves of *uva ursi*, or bearberry, one and a half drachms; bicarbonate of soda, one drachm.

To be mixed together well, and divided into *twelve powders*, one of which to be taken three times a day, in the barley water.

The effect of this treatment was evident on the second day, the inflammation having subsided considerably, and by the third day he was quite well, with the exception of a little soreness when urinating.

Inflammation of the *veru montanum* is also very apt to be produced by retaining the urine too long, when the bladder is very full, and particularly by trying to prevent the escape of semen, during coition, which is sometimes done by pressing the penis at its lower part. The effects of this practice, which is often resorted to under the idea of preventing conception, are most serious; in addition to the inflammation already referred to, it also leads to involuntary seminal losses, as will be explained further on. Such destructive practices would never be attempted if men were not so thoroughly ignorant of everything relating to their physical systems, and while that ignorance remains it will always *cause* more disease than medical science will be able to cure.

The veru montanum is also very apt to become diseased whenever the prostate gland is affected, the two parts sympathizing so intimately together.

The semen enters the urethra just at the lower end of the veru montanum, by two small openings, which are very liable to be more or less closed when this organ, or the prostate is inflamed, and thus the flow of semen is partially and sometimes totally prevented.

Sometimes the montanum will swell till it completely fills up the neck of the bladder, so that neither urine nor semen can possibly escape till it has been reduced. It is also liable to be the seat of cancer or scrofula, like the prostate.

The urethra is liable to congenital malformations, as well as to subsequent accidents, and some of these may be of a serious character. In some young persons it is permanently contracted, so that the escape of urine is attended with great difficulty and pain. This fault, however, usually amends with the growth, and with constant use. Children so circumstanced are a very long time in discharging their urine, which flows in a small stream, and with more or less distress. In very severe cases bougies may be used to dilate the passage, but it is better, if the trouble is not too great, to wait till toward puberty, and see if nature herself will not effect an improvement. Still more rarely there are found congenital strictures, or they come spontaneously, without any apparent cause. If these are not very bad, it is perhaps better to wait till fourteen or fifteen years of age, before operating, as the changes in the system at that time are very great, and an improvement may occur naturally. If they are too severe, however, or endure beyond that time, it will be necessary to use the bougie, which is in reality the only effective remedy in such cases. Many youths cause stricture by compressing the penis in masturbation, and bruising the urethra. I have known many do this to prevent the semen from escaping at the moment of ejaculation, from the notion that if this was done the practice *would not injure them*. It is of course unnecessary to show the fallacy of such a notion, but it may be advisable to explain again what becomes of the seminal fluid in such cases, for very often not a particle is seen. At the moment of ejaculation the semen escapes by jets into the urethra, from the ejaculatory canal, through certain small openings, called the *ejaculatory ducts*—which are shown in the plates—and then flows down the canal and escapes from the body. If, however, the urethra is compressed, so as to prevent it from escaping externally, it must flow in some other direction, and the only other way is *into the bladder*, which it enters by forcing open the neck and passing on each side of the veru montanum. It is then expended as much as if it had left the body in the natural manner, as it comes away with the next flow of urine. In the meantime its presence irritates the bladder, and its passage in this reverse way is very apt to cause inflammation in the veru montanum and prostate gland, and even to produce stricture, as before explained, with a weakness of the ducts disposing to involuntary seminal losses.

The urethra is also unusually irritable in some persons, without any particular disease, and burns and smart when they urinate as if they had gonorrhœa. Some men, and even some children, have more or less of this trouble, either constantly or at times, and suffer from it considerably. It will generally be observed in such persons that the urine is high colored, and deposits a reddish or yellowish sediment on being allowed to stand, indicating either gravel or chronic inflammation of the bladder. The best treatment is that given for inflammation of the veru montanum, further back, and the best preventive is to pay strict attention to the diet and drink.

Nothing should be eaten or drunk that is heating or stimulating, or that is likely to produce constipation, which always aggravates these troubles. Spirituous and fermented liquors are very bad, and coffee is usually injurious. The best drinks are soda-water, barley-tea, gum-arabic water, and mucilage of sassafras pith, or bene plant. A little carbonate of soda taken every morning is a perfect preventive in some, and a little magnesia in others. *All* excesses must be carefully avoided, and the bowels kept constantly free. A frequent warm bath is nearly always beneficial.

Many of the diseases of the prostate gland, and many of the operations upon the penis are frequent causes of stricture and inflammation of the urethra, and they therefore require, on that account, the utmost care and attention. It is not unfrequently the case, in unskillful hands, that after a perfect *cure* of one of these diseases a stricture is left that is a worse evil than the original one.

THE PROSTATE GLAND.

The uses of this organ, like those of the vesicles, have not yet been satisfactorily determined. It was formerly thought to be a simple gland, intended to secrete a peculiar liquor which was necessary to mix with the semen. This view, however, has been lately somewhat modified, and it is now considered to be rather a collection of several glands or follicles forming one mass or organ together. These little follicles secrete a peculiar whitish fluid, which is conveyed by a number of small ducts into the urethra, close by the veru montanum, where the semen enters. It is probable that this fluid is, in some way or other, essential to the perfection of the semen as it leaves the body.

The prostate gland is liable to several forms of disease, some of which are both painful and dangerous, and all of which, unfortunately, are but little capable of treatment. It seems specially liable to engorgement, or swelling, and to scrofulous and cancerous indurations. Sometimes also it becomes cartilaginous, or even almost bony, and at other times calculi or stones form in it, similar to those found in the bladder. Inflammation and abscess of the prostate gland are very apt to follow improper treatment for gonorrhœa, particularly when bougies or injections have been used, and it is also a frequent consequence of cauterization for curing involuntary seminal losses. Blows on the perineum may also give rise to it, or too severe and long-continued pressure, from horse-riding, or using a hard seat, or even from *very tight small-clothes*. This trouble is both an annoying and a serious one, and frequently excessively painful. When the prostate is simply swollen, it merely causes a sense of fullness and uneasiness in the perineum, with difficulty in urinating or discharging the semen, and in passing the bowels. The reason for these impediments will be evident when the situation and connections of the organ are borne in mind. The smallest increase in the size of the prostate makes it press on the urethra and partly close it, so that the flow of urine is necessarily obstructed, and the orifices of the seminal tubes being also compressed, the flow of semen through them is similarly intercepted. In very severe cases a total stoppage of both urine and semen occurs, which if not relieved may lead to inflammation of the bladder and testes of the most acute and dangerous character. When this stage has been reached the pain and suffering become most intense, and if the inflammation and swelling are not speedily reduced, an abscess forms, which eventually breaks and discharges its contents, when some little relief is obtained, though the disease has then assumed a

much more annoying form, and is more difficult to treat. If the abscess breaks internally, there is a continual flow of pus or matter from the urethra, attended by severe smarting and pain when the urine or semen is passed, and by a constant irritation in all the neighboring parts, which acts on the nervous system in the most distressing manner. Occasionally the abscess breaks externally in the perineum, which is, if possible, still more troublesome. The pus keeps flowing in the same manner, only not from the urethra, and the same constitutional irritation is experienced, but the pain in urinating is not always so great.

The treatment of this trouble must depend upon the stage at which it has arrived, and the causes that produced it. While there is simply slight swelling and inflammation from bruises or blows, every means must be taken to remove it as speedily as possible. The patient must keep perfectly still, lying on his back most of the time, while fomentations of hot water, with laudanum, are freely applied to the perineum, or flannels dipped in the hot fluid may be placed between the limbs and pressed up against the perineum, changing them frequently, and using them as hot as they can be borne. The bowels must be freely moved with castor oil, and the diet must be light and unstimulating. A very good practice is for the patient to sit in hot water, for half an hour at a time, or over the steam of it. These means persevered in, when the uneasiness and difficulty are first felt, will often subdue the inflammation, and prevent any further evil consequences. A general warm bath, during which hot teas are taken, to promote perspiration and the flow of urine, are also of great service, and when the bruise is very bad, as shown by blackness of the skin, leeches must be applied, either on the perineum or inside of the thighs.

If the inflammation be of a chronic form, not produced by any external violence, the best application is the *mercurial ointment* rubbed on the perineum till it produces a decided effect on the system. Along with this may also be taken the solution of iodide of potassium, prescribed in hydrocele, the bowels being kept regularly open with salts or castor oil. Cold lotions must be frequently applied of alum or sugar of lead, and no spices or alcoholic liquors must be taken on any account. Sexual excesses are particularly hurtful in this complaint.

Very many incipient attacks of inflammation of the prostate might be cured in this way, and the swelling dispersed, if proper attention were paid to the diet and strict temperance practiced in all things.

Most frequently, however, this trouble continues, and either forms an abscess or an indolent tumor, which every now and then enlarges so much that the flow of semen and urine is entirely stopped, causing intense suffering, and a palliative operation has to be performed to give relief. Many patients suffer from regular periodical attacks of this kind, and in others they come on always after any little extra bodily exertion, or mental anxiety. In these cases the use of purgatives internally, with cold lotions and belladonna or hellebore plasters externally, will frequently mitigate the severity of the pain and cut short the attack. A grain of opium may also be taken, when the suffering is most intense, or thirty drops of laudanum, in some gum-arabic water. The ointment of belladonna and camphor, prescribed in inflammation of the testicle, will also frequently be found of great benefit, and many experience decided relief from leeches to the perineum and thighs. The nature of the operation to be performed, in any extreme case, depends upon the peculiar circumstances attending it, and must be left to the judgment of the physician. The internal application of caustic is practiced by some, and others use

the lancet freely, but there are both risk and difficulty in both. At the very commencement of the disease it is sometimes possible to introduce a catheter without much trouble, and this may serve to keep the urethra open while the other means are employed to reduce the inflammation. The catheter, however, is not admissible when much force is needed to introduce it, nor when it increases the inflammation. One of the most reliable proofs of swelling of the prostate gland, when the tumor cannot be felt externally or in the rectum, is the impossibility of passing a catheter, owing to the enlarged prostate having blocked up the urethra.

Inflammation of the prostate gland may terminate in *induration*, or permanent hardness, and also in *mortification*, as well as in abscess or dispersion. When mortification ensues, it is of course exceedingly dangerous, if not necessarily fatal, and we have no known remedy to cure it. The induration will sometimes exhibit a decided scrofulous tendency, and pursue the same course as scrofulous testicle, and at other times it will become perfectly cartilaginous, or bony.

When calculi or stones form in the prostate, it is sometimes possible to cut them out, providing their presence is so evident that there can be no mistake, but this is very seldom the case. Like most other diseases of the prostate, the indications of this are so obscure, that its precise seat and nature in most cases can only be guessed at.

Sometimes the stones will be discharged, by way of the urethra, and relief immediately follow. Warm bathing and fomentations probably tend to facilitate this mode of escape, by relaxing the parts. I have known persons who had long suffered from all the usual symptoms of enlarged prostate, be perfectly relieved after voiding a few calculi, seldom larger than a pea.

Among other means of obtaining relief, occasionally successful in prostatic enlargement, I may mention injections in the rectum of cold thin starch and laudanum, frequently repeated. Galvanism I have also tried, and in some cases with marked success.

Chronic enlargement of the prostate gland is rather common amongst old men, particularly those who have led a sedentary life, or been addicted to sexual excesses.

EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY OF THE GENITAL ORGANS.

Sometimes the sensibility of the genitals is so much exalted, either naturally or accidentally, that emissions occur upon the slightest excitement, and the individual is thus made impotent from inability to perfect the connection. This condition is in reality a diseased one, and ought so to be considered, as much as any other we have described.

The seat of this extra sensibility is sometimes in the testes or vas deferens, or in the ejaculatory ducts, but most frequently in the glans penis. When it is very great the organs are thrown into a violent orgasm almost at a touch, and emission occurs at the very first attempt. I have known men married for years who never had perfect association with their partners during the whole time, and simply from this cause. They were in no respect whatever deficient, nor even subject to nervous excitement, but were unfortunately affected by this excessive sensibility. Other men I have known who dare not marry at all from this cause, feeling sure that if they did the marriage could never be consummated.

The causes of this trouble appear to lie in the peculiar structure of the glans, the skin of which is unusually delicate, while its nerves are ramified into thousands of

minute twigs, which are distributed to every point of the surface. The exquisite sensibility thus produced is so great, in some, that the mere touch of the clothes is sufficient to excite, and the patient is thus kept in a constant state of irritation. Sometimes a similar state is induced by disease, particularly by inflammation, the penis being then as tender as the surface of an abscess just before it breaks, and feeling the slightest pressure or friction.

When this excessive sensibility is produced by any disease, it will usually disappear when the disease is cured, but when it is natural the removal or modification of it becomes much more difficult, though great relief can nearly always be obtained. The first requisite is to remove all extraneous sources of irritation, and to attend to the diet, clothing, and general regimen; then the great point is to *harden the skin of the glans*, so that the nerves may be more thickly covered, and their sensibility reduced. This must be effected by the constant use of astringent washes, or caustics, and in certain cases by the use of galvanism. Every one is familiar with the effect of certain substances on the hands, in making them hard and destroying the delicacy of their touch, and it will be readily seen that the same means will deaden the sensibility of the glans and other parts. Lime-water is very good in some cases, and water saturated with iron-rust in others, but the best agents are the astringents, such as alum-water, solutions of tannin, or white oak bark, or gum kino or catechu. These must be used every day, as washes, and the glans kept covered with cotton soaked in them. They will always do good, and frequently effect a perfect cure, but when they are not sufficient, caustic must be employed, and this must be done by a physician.

PLATE XXXV.

DESCENT OF THE TESTICLE INTO THE SCROTUM.

In the fœtus, before birth, the abdomen and scrotum form one cavity, the scrotum being in fact only a part of the abdomen, as seen in the plate.

3. The testicle, just under 2, the kidney. The testicle has to descend from that position down into the scrotum 7 (through 6 to 7).

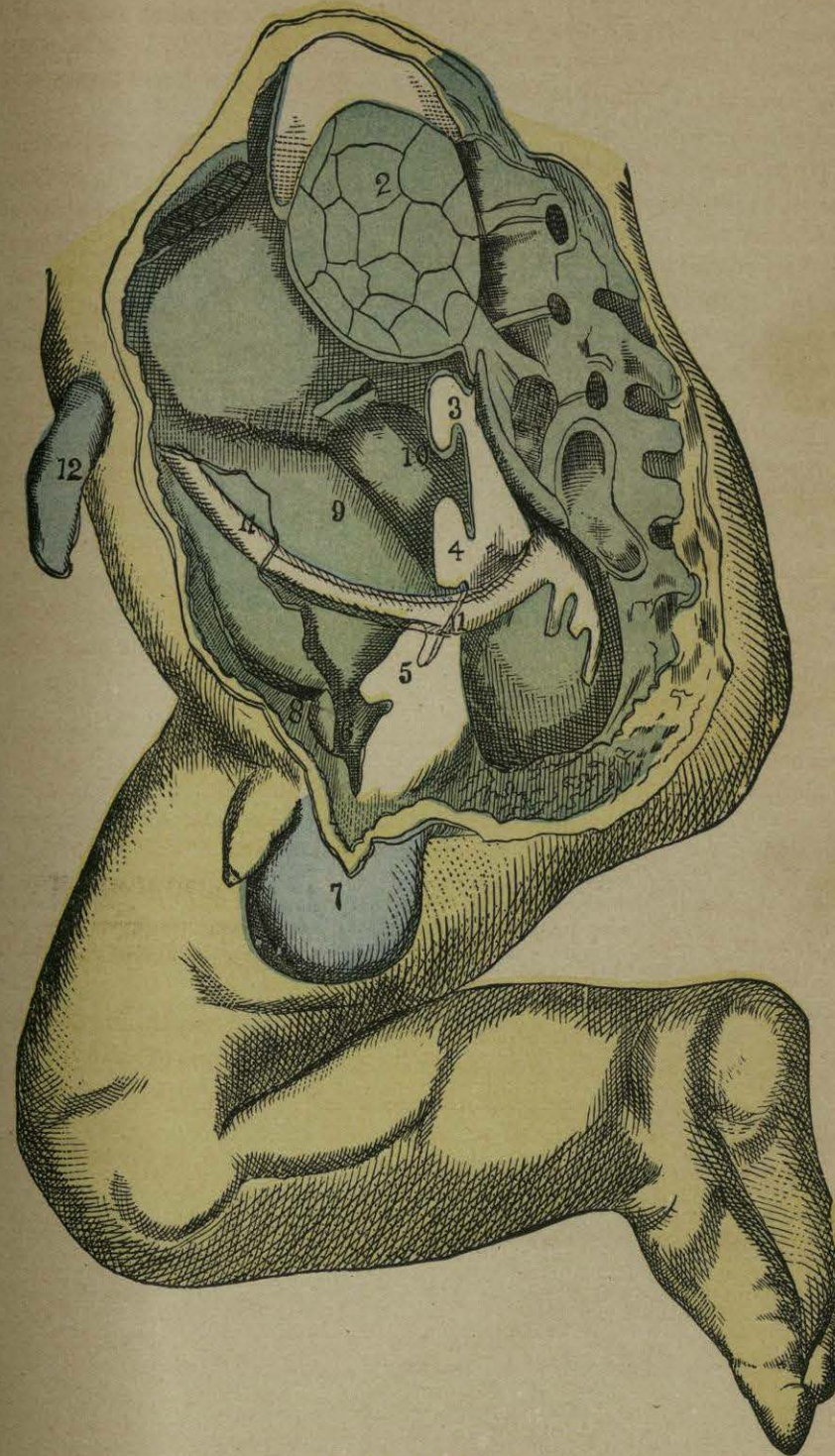
The descent is gradual, from the sixth to the ninth month, the testicle going by degrees from 3 to 4, to 5, to 6, and finally into the scrotum (7) at birth.

After birth the opening from the abdomen into the scrotum closes up, except what part of it is filled by the spermatic cord.

The first position of the testicle, it will be seen at 3, is the same as that of the female ovary.

10 is the large intestine: 12, the navel string, or umbilical cord.

PLATE XXXV.



Descent of the Testicles.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SPERMATORRHEA, OR EXCESSIVE LOSS OF SEMEN.

THIS is a subject of more importance, as regards human health and happiness, than perhaps any other that can be mentioned, and yet it is one about which scarcely anything is known, except by a few individuals. I do not hesitate to say that more evil effects, ten times over, are produced by this almost unsuspected cause than by all the diseases already enumerated, and perhaps even than by nearly all other diseases put together. And not only is it destructive to the *body*, by preventing its proper development in youth, making it a mass of disease in mature life, and causing its premature decay and death, but it is equally baneful to the *mind*. By its influence the vivacity and energy of youth are changed to a listless indifference, the vigor of manhood is destroyed, and the calm, peaceful content of mature life is turned into despondency and gloom. Many a young man with mental powers capable of making him both eminent and happy, and with every requisite of bodily health and strength, has terminated a short-lived miserable existence by suicide, or dragged out his life in a state of idiotic imbecility through this unsuspected disease.

The excessive loss may either be the result of licentious indulgence, or it may occur without the individual's cognizance, the effects being much the same in either case, though apt to be ascribed to other causes in the latter case, and also to be often underrated.

The fact that the semen does frequently escape in an involuntary manner is generally known, there being but few men who have not so suffered more or less, and it is also well known that such involuntary losses are very injurious to health, but the real extent, either of the disease or its evil effects, are known to but few. The only cases known to occur, by people generally, are those in which the escaped semen is actually *seen*, but very frequently the loss occurs and is never suspected. In like manner, the only effects of this disease that are usually taken cognizance of are those which are plain and obvious; but there are many others, much more to be dreaded, that can only be detected and assigned to the right cause by those practiced in observing them. Many men suffer the extreme of wretchedness and disease, become insane, and die prematurely, from this complaint, without ever having dreamed of anything of the kind. Frequently, too, their medical advisers are equally in the dark, and go on attempting to cure the mere effects, while the grand cause of all is left untouched. Spermatorrhœa, as I shall show further on, when excessive, may produce symptoms similar to those of almost every disease the system is subject to, and thus lead to the belief that there is disease of the heart, liver complaint, dyspepsia, and a hundred other affections, of which there is in reality no trace whatever. It may also materially impair the powers of the mind, or prevent their proper manifestation, and so change the feelings and disposition that the individual can scarcely be recognized as the same person, by his conduct.

The ravages of this destructive disease are not confined to any particular class, age, or condition, nor is it always a consequence of vicious conduct, as some suppose, but, on the contrary, it frequently attacks the most virtuous and exemplary. Some of the causes that lead to it may operate as well upon the healthy and strong as upon the weak and sickly, and attack the middle-aged married man, of temperate habits, as well as the licentious unmarried youth. It is therefore of the utmost importance that this destructive pestilence should be unveiled, so that every one may know how to guard against it and ward off its evils.

To understand why it is that spermatorrhœa leads to such manifold and diversified evils, it will be necessary to refer to the organic and sympathetic connection between the generative organs and the rest of the system, the intimacy and extent of which are but little known.

To a considerable extent, the genital organs are in direct connection with the urinary, and in some places the same parts are common to both. The lower part of the large intestine, or the rectum, is also in close juxtaposition to them, as may be readily seen by referring to the illustrations of the male system. Any disease, therefore, which affects the genital organs is very apt to derange them likewise, and it is quite possible that the secondary disease may be more severe than the primary one. Every one knows that diseases of the bladder, kidneys, urethra, and rectum are quite common, and frequently very distressing, while the causes of them are often undiscovered. In many such cases, they are only *symptoms*, the primary trouble being spermatorrhœa.

The great cause, however, of the genital organs exerting such a general influence over every part is their intimate connection with the nervous system. There is no other process carried on in the body that requires so much nervous power as the formation and evacuation of the semen, and no other is therefore so exhaustive of the vital energy. Even in youth the amount of this power required is very great, to effect the full formation of the seminiferous glands; in fact, Nature seems to put forth so much effort for this purpose that every other part is stimulated at the same time, and thus the perfecting of the genital organs is the means of developing the whole system.

This is the reason why those who are castrated are always imperfect, both in body and mind, and die early. If the testes are removed, there is no other part for which nature will sufficiently exert herself to stimulate the whole, and consequently the development is only partial. Those who have ever seen *eunuchs* will have had sufficient proof of this, but any one may observe the same thing in mutilated animals. Compare the ox with the bull, for instance, or the entire horse with the castrated one, and it will be at once evident that the form of the body, and the disposition, are completely changed. Even in after-life the vital energy required to secrete the semen invigorates the whole system, and disposes it to a constant activity that would otherwise not be exhibited. Men deficient in this respect are never noted for their enterprise and love of adventure, but are always inclined to be calm, inactive, and retired, even when possessing genius. Nearly all men of strong, energetic minds and daring dispositions are of warm temperaments, or, in other words, have a plentiful secretion of semen. It is, therefore, an essential and important agent, both for perfecting the system in early life and also for rousing it to sufficient exertion afterward, and beyond doubt a deficiency or superabundance of this fluid may exert a decided influence on the character of the individual. In all probability, many are dull and inactive from

deficiency in this respect, while many others are too impulsive and restless from excess, and yet the truth is seldom suspected. It is too much the custom with physiologists to regard *only the brain* as being concerned in the production of mental characteristics, and to consider it as the sole fountain of that mysterious influence which is constantly exerted over every part of the system. A truly philosophical view of the subject will, however, I am confident, show that there are other parts whose action should by no means be overlooked, and among the most important of these are the genital organs.

A due consideration of these facts explains the true philosophy of sexual indulgence, and shows why licentious excess produces so many and such severe evils. In a healthy state, Nature goes on supplying the necessary nervous energy, both to the testes and the rest of the system, till a superabundance of semen is formed, and then there is experienced a desire for its emission, the gratification of which is, physiologically speaking, under such circumstances, both proper and healthful. It is, in fact, only the expenditure of the overplus energy, and does not in any way weaken or destroy. If, however, by artificial excitement, or factitious desire, the seminal emission occurs before this superabundance exists, it becomes exhaustive, and seriously impairs the vital energy. Indulgence should therefore be allowed *only* when this overplus power excites to it, and any man can easily tell when that is by studying his feelings and experience, and by not giving way to artificial excitement.

When the seminal emission occurs oftener than nature properly provides for, the nervous energy expended is no longer a useless superfluity, but a portion of the common stock, and its abstraction necessarily weakens the power of the whole system. For a time Nature can, by extra effort, supply the deficiency thus produced, but if the excess be too long continued this effort at last fails, and then a general prostration ensues. The career and ultimate end of any licentious debauchee will well illustrate this, and should act as a timely warning to shun the same evil path.

The reason why the victim of excessive seminal discharge suffers from almost every ailment of body and mind, will now be evident. The stomach cannot digest, the heart cannot propel the blood, nor the brain think, unless they are each supplied with a due amount of nervous power, and if most of that be expended in the production and evacuation of the semen, of course those organs will be deficiently supplied, and will consequently perform their functions imperfectly. Here, then, we have the cause in such cases of dyspepsia, heart disease, dullness of the intellect, insanity and a thousand other evils.

Besides this exhaustion of the nervous energy, however, it is also probable, from observations recently made, that the semen requires for its perfect formation some important and subtle elements of the body, the abstraction of which, in too great quantities, is highly injurious. It has been supposed, and with considerable plausibility, that a part of the seminal fluid is identical with some portion of the *brain and nervous substance*, and that this common material is produced for the use of both respectively. This explains why the mind is nearly always active in those who are of a warm temperament, because the brain is nourished by a part of the same material which is produced to form the semen. It also shows why the mind must suffer when the semen is expended in too great quantity, because the very substance the brain requires is that taken away, and it suffers, in fact, from want of its proper nutriment. In confirmation of this it has been stated that the brain has actually been found *wasted and softened* in many persons who have died from licentious excesses, and I