

[Tissot, Onanism, London, 1766 - suite]

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"Beauty (says he) has charms which dilate the heart, and multiply the vital spirits, that proceed from it. We may very well believe, with St. CHRYSOSTOM, that to excite one's self repugnantly to the laws of nature, is, in that respect, a much greater crime than the other."

And, in fact, can there be a doubt of Nature's not having annexed more joy to the pleasures procured by the means which are in her appointed course, than by any which are out of it?

An eighth and last cause which augments the dangers of self-pollution, is the regrets, the horrors, which cannot fail of being the consequence of it, when once one's eyes come to be opened on the crime and its dangers.

Miseri quorum gaudia crimen habent!

Wretched are those joys which are obnoxious to remorse!

And, surely, if there are any human beings in this case, the self-pollutors must be among them.

When the veil is drawn, the representation of their conduct appears to them in all its most hideous colors and aspects. They find themselves guilty of a crime, of which divine justice would not postpone the punishment, but punished it immediately with death;

death; a crime reputed a very great one even by the heathens themselves.

*Hoc nihil esse putas! scelus est; mihi crede,
sed ingens
Quantum, vix, animo concipis ipse tuo.*

MART.

The shame that pursues them infinitely augments their misery. Such, it is true, is the dissoluteness in some places, that debauches with women are hardly looked upon there, but as matter of custom; the guilty of them make no mystery of it, and have no notion of their being the more contemptible for it: But where is the self-pollutor that dares avow his infamy? Ought not this necessity of wrapping himself up in the shades of secrecy, appear, in his own eyes, a proof of the criminality of this act? What numbers have not perished for their never having dared to reveal the cause of their evils?

It appears a natural sentiment in several letters of the Onania, "I would rather die than appear before you, after such a confession."

And indeed one cannot help being infinitely more ready to excuse a man, who being seduced by that inclination which Nature has ingraven on all hearts, and of which she makes use for the preservation of the species, is in no wrong but that of not re-

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