

[Galien. Des lieux affectés - suite]

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the organ which contains it, or it flows out spontaneously because of a weakness of those parts which fail to retain it. And this is the case with the sperm (K 440). It is the natural function of all these organs either to discharge or to retain [their secretions] at the proper time. Discharge takes place when the canal opens but the other part of the hollow organ contracts and expels the entire contents of its cavity through the opened canal. However, retention takes place when the canal remains closed and the retaining organ does not exert any pressure on its contents; to the contrary, these are held back and contained.

In this manner originates secretion and retention of fluids which are naturally present in the hollow organs. Under unnatural conditions retention occurs on account of weakness of the excreting power; whereas excretion occurs because of weakness of the retentive power or because of some condition which sets the organ in motion. In the same manner the generative [spermatic] organs are affected in epilepsy and other forms of spastic diseases, when the convulsions become severe. Then we also see that convulsions of other organs such as hands, feet or fingers are often combined with the convulsions of the body; otherwise the extremities (K 441) alone are affected. Therefore, it does not appear absurd that such a condition should manifest itself only in the generative vessels as *gonorrhoea*, similar to the involuntary discharge of urine, when we find a paralysis of the retentive faculty [of the bladder]. Therefore, gonorrhea is a disease of the generative organs but not of the external sexual organs which serve as outlet for the discharge of semen.

Priapism, however, appears as a symptom of the external genital organ. It is possible that the penis itself is not affected but that we deal here exclusively with a disease of the arteries which are in an unnatural condition, similar to the state which occasionally affects the vessels when a natural erection involves this entire organ. It is evident that the penis is expanded by pneuma, for which we have as proof the speed of its expansion and retraction. A fluid could not produce such a fast change in each instance.

These are the conditions of the penis. Dissection further reveals that the arteries which enter the penis are rather large for such a small organ. Because of the special nature of this organ⁴¹ (K 442) which no other part possesses, its body is made up of sinewy tissue and resembles a round tube (*corpora cavernosa*) throughout, with the exception of the glans (*balanos*). What else could one suppose but that the penis is filled with a vaporous air which enters from the arteries when it increases its volume by erection? But the glans always keeps the same size because the tendinous cylinders (*corpora cavernosa*) do not enter it.

What is now the reason that the penis expands on sexual stimulation? Or why do the loins become hot when people go to bed? When we can find the answer to these questions, we can also expect to discover the condition leading to priapism. It is quite evident that the inflation of the penis has its primary cause in the arteries or the sinewy tubes, when a change takes place from its

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11
8