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Joseph William Howe, [Photocopie]

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DISEASES FROM EXCESS AND MASTURBATION. 97

nervous system by the secret vice. Of this there can be no doubt. The irritability of the nerve centers is remarkably increased in all onanists. Specially is this true of that portion of the brain known as the *tuber annulare*, a collection of gray matter in the pons varolii. This point is the great center which governs sensation and voluntary motion. Longet says that all sensations coming from the periphery to the brain, are converted into motor impulses through this ganglion. And any undue irritation of the part will excite irregular muscular movements.

The abnormal excitability of the medulla oblongata, which also arises from the secret habit, is said to be an important factor in producing these convulsions. Hammond considers that all forms of eclampsia arise from abnormal irritability of this portion of the nervous system. Wherever the actual starting point of the convulsions may be, one thing is certain, viz., the condition of the nervous system is such that slight irritation from within or without may develop involuntary spasmodic contractions of the muscles ordinarily under the control of the will. Dr. Baker, of the Cambridgeshire Asylum, says, "in seven out of ten cases of chronic epilepsy in the male sex, the genital organs are the great sources of excitation, and generally from the morbid state in which they are kept by the habits of the patient." Dr. Flint relates the case of a young lady twenty years of age who suffered from daily epileptic fits for three years. She stated that the habit of masturbation was taught her at the age of six, and had been indulged in daily until she was sixteen. Afterwards her mind was constantly filled with lascivious dreams, and during the three years of her epilepsy lascivious dreams attended by an orgasm had occurred every night. Baker Brown, of London,



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