

THE EFFECTS OF INCOMPLETE COITION.¹

By W. B. PIGG, M. D., South McAlester, I. T.



WILL not apologize for the ungrammatical construction of the sentence which heads my paper—I did not make it, and I will it to those who did.

The question of coition is one which concerns mankind. It is of vast importance to the human race. It deals with the rights of the unborn. With the laws of reproduction. With the functions of generation and with the pathology of copulation. Upon it depends much conubial happiness—and incompatibility. To it much is ascribed that seems strange and incomprehensible. The asylums of

the land have sheltered many for which it is responsible.

I do not know who selected for me this subject. Some member of the program committee, perhaps, who was too modest to tell his own experience, or it may be that he desired to compare my experience with his own. My experience and observation, I must admit, have been more largely with the complete variety. Indeed, this particular field of investigation has never seemed to me alluring; it was always unsatisfactory, but for the benefit of those whose experience has been different, who have so kindly delegated to me this task, inexperienced though I am, I will do my best.

I will take a somewhat wider range of the subject, however, than that allowed me in the caption of this paper, for when I mount my Pegasus to soar, I want no golden bridle of Minerva to restrain him. I shall include under this head all cases of sexual perversity, where the act is other than normal. In this class may be included every variety of sexual garbling, from sodomy to masturbation; every disloyal act under

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the reign of Priapus, from titillation to the act of going down. This subject is not a new one—it is as old as civilization, older.

Much has been written on this subject in ages past and present. The ablest writers of every land have deigned to give it their attention. From Moses to Gibbon it has entered into history—from Homer to Hammond it has furnished food for fact and fancy.

Old classics tell how Kronos, armed with the sickle of Gaeac, interrupted Urinus in the act, amputated his genitals and cast out the bleeding member behind him; how, out of the genitals themselves, as they swam and foamed upon the sea, emerged the goddess Aphrodite, whose soft tread awakened the sleeping verdure into bloom, and whose smile fired with love the hearts of men, whose form has been the masterpiece of all who strove with brush and chisel, and upon whose altars burned forever the sweet incense of love and beauty; yet, at best, it was but a case of incomplete coition. No wonder the full act produced the Titans, the Cyclops and the hundred-handed Hekaton cheires.

The earliest history of sexual perversity is told in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis: "And there came two angels to Sodom at even, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground * * * and he pressed upon them greatly, and they turned in unto him and entered into his house, and he made them a feast and did bake unleaven bread, and they did eat, but before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter. And they called unto Lot and said unto him, 'Where are the men which came unto thee this night, bring them out unto us that we know them;' and Lot went out at the door unto them and shut the door after him, and said, 'I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.'" He then offered to them in lieu of the strangers under his protection his daughters, two blushing maids, surcharged with micturine and acetic acid, who would doubtless have been willing for the sacrifice, judging by their subsequent conduct. But this offer, which was as tempting as it was generous, was indignantly refused. They wanted to get at the official surgeon's specialty. To seek, it may be, the philosopher stones—and the band played on. 'Tis needless to add that there was "A hot time in the old town that night."

The case of Onan is familiar to all readers of sacred writ. His sister-in-law, young, beautiful and voluptuous, had scarce laid aside her widow's weeds, when, according to the custom of the country, she became his wife. Her first husband, Er, had done wickedly in the sight of the Lord, and was cut off before she had known satisfaction. No doubt, the young widow was quivering in delightful anticipation. Onan was young, strong and lubberly; she would teach him the sweet dalliance of rosy desire. She would unfold her womanly loveliness before him and make him drunken in a frenzy of delight. She could not wait until the bridal couch was spread, but hand in hand they strolled out under the almond trees. The lap-wings flitted sportively in the rays of the setting sun; all nature was joyous. The odors of the aloe and of the anise laden the zephyrs with their sweet perfume; the blue-jay (saucy bird of Jericho) was screaming a last adieu to the swallows at their evening play. Upon

a couch of asphodel rested this happy pair. Hand in hand they watched Apollo's golden car slowly disappearing in the west. They talked of love, of the delights of marital felicity, of home and of happiness. He was enraptured by the lovely creature that lay upon the ground beside him, as beautiful as Venus from her morning bath. With throbbing pulses and dilated nostrils he drank in the sweet incense of her presence. A sensuous drowsiness had overcome the twain, but beyond this veil of joy the youth was tortured by selfish remembrance; he knew that, according to patriarchal custom, the offspring gendered of him must bear his brother's name. The thought rankled in his breast, but for this how happy he would have been; it was the fly in his apothecary's ointment; he could not dispel it, and even as he gazed and fondled her who was his own, a resolution as craven as it was ignominious took possession of him. With this thought uppermost in his mind he yielded to the burning passion of this Hebe in human form. For a brief period all else was forgotten, but just when he should have thought of nothing but his present beguilement, he bethought him of his brother's seed, and then and there he committed a sin which has borne his name throughout all the ages.

The earth received what should have been transformed into the first great link in the tribe of Judah, "whose scepter might not depart till Shiloh come," "And the Lord slew him."—Good shot! He ought to have slain him before he worked poor lovely Tamar into a fever of delight, and "quit her cold" when she was most interested. No wonder old Judah, despairing of establishing a race from such spawn, took the job into his own hands.

I mention these things to show that certain forms of sexual dyscrasia have extended through all times and to all peoples. From the Court Mysteries of Siam, with its pleasure boys, to the sexless eunuchs guarding the harems of the Orient. From the unspeakable atrocities of Oscar Wilde to the sexualis pathogenica which ended in the murder of Freda Ward. Nor are these cases alone of interest to the human race. "There are others," among which may be mentioned prevention to conception.

A learned authority, whose name I do not recall, has assured us that this warfare upon the unborn is being practiced to a greater extent than medical men are aware of.

That the so-called contrivances for the prevention of disease are but other means of counubial masturbation, that it is sapping the vitality of the men and undermining the nervous systems of the women, that a large per cent. of the neurotic diseases of the day are traceable to this cause alone, that much of the marital infelicity that is filling our courts with divorces is traceable to incomplete coition.

Incomplete coition in these cases may be where one of the parties (usually the husband) participates in the marital act and the wishes of the wife disregarded. Perhaps she realizes desire when it is too late to be of service. Her organs are left in a congested state, and a douche of cold water drives the hyperemia from the vagina to the ovaries. The practice being often enacted engenders endometritis, leucorrhœa and vaginismus. Cases where the husband is robust and the wife delicate, where she is weak and nervous and he is frequent in his demands upon her strength,

such conditions soon make themselves felt in spinal irritation, neurasthenias and neuralgias.

What cases of retroversion might be avoided if a man would ride higher and go slower; what cases of nervous, debilitated women would be spared if he would court his wife until he had won desire, and not rush matters, until the mouth watered for the fruit. We, who work in gynecology, who observe closely, will frequently benefit our patients by sending them from home for a few months, and giving to their husbands a course of lectures before their return. A woman who is doing the work of her family and suckling an infant, ought to be spared from being her husband's mistress at the same time. A woman, during lactation, needs rest; she needs sleep at nights; she is in no condition to enjoy sexual congress, and it is our duty, as medical men, to tell them so. They look to us for protection in this line—who but we can speak in their behalf? Who but we can point out to them the dangers of making a good woman old before her time? When I go into a house and see a husband, sleek, fat, jolly and hearty, and the wife pale, anæmic and nervous, if she has no definite disease, I can easily guess the cause—incomplete coition. He is killing her. If she has a disease he should let her alone.

I do not desire to be understood as advocating continence among married people, but I do say, and from professional observation maintain, that more women are suffering from an overdose of married relation, than from almost any other cause. Watch the difference in these patients when they have had rest. Look at the rosy cheeked young widow, whose step is as elastic as a girl in her teens. See the bloom of health upon the cheek of the little wife who has returned from her summer vacation. Note the wives of diabetic husbands who have lost desire. Notice the improved appearance of the deacon's wife while you are treating her liege lord for "gravel," contracted in the camp-meeting lavatory. Does it not speak volumes for my theory?

Gentlemen, in your daily practice I beg you, for suffering womanhood, that you will remember the beacon-lights that I have hung along the fogs of this much-neglected subject, and apply your observation to prove that the truths which I have spoken are only half told.

As I think upon this subject, many other phases occur to me which might be interesting. I might discuss, and probably should, the masturbations of the adolescent, the sexual perversions of men, and of women, upon themselves, and upon other animals, but I have written enough for one paper. I feel flattered that the committee on program has seen fit to delegate to me a subject that they felt themselves unable to handle, and I trust that I have discharged my duty to their satisfaction.