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DR. HAVELOCK ELLIS ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX.

By R. W. SHUFELDT, M. D., Washington, D. C.

"Studies in the Psychology of Sex" is the latest book by one of the profoundest thinkers, one of the best and most lucid writers in the domain of sexual psychology now engaged upon that all-important subject, Dr. Havelock Ellis, of England. My thanks are due to his publishers, F. A. Davis Company, of Philadelphia, for a copy of this work, it having just come from their presses (1901). It is a neatly bound octavo volume of nearly three hundred pages of matter, the subject being introduced by an able author's preface (v-vii), and the "Studies" falling naturally under three heads for treatment. These are: (1) "The Evolution of Modesty"; (2) "The Phenomena of Sexual Periodicity" (III Sections); and (3) "Auto-Erotism: A Study of the Spontaneous Manifestations of the Sexual Impulse" (III Sections); the whole being completed by three masterly appendices (A, B and C) contributed by Mr. F. H. Perry-Coste, and illustrated by his valuable diagrams (Charts I-XIII); and finally, an "Index of Authors" and an "Index of Subjects."

In stating the nature of these subjects in his "Preface," Dr. Ellis says that "The present volume contains three studies which seem to me to be necessary *prolegomena* to that analysis of the sexual instinct which must form the chief part of an investigation into the psychology of sex. The first sketches the main outlines of a complex emotional state which is of fundamental importance in sexual psychology; the second, by bringing together evidence from widely different regions, suggests a tentative explanation of facts that are still imperfectly known; the third attempts to show that even in fields where we assume our knowledge to be adequate, a broader view of the phenomena teaches us to suspend judgment and to adopt a more cautious attitude."

The aim of these very complete studies is primarily to aid in establishing a more comprehensive understanding of sexual phenomena—a field in both medicine and psychology, for various reasons, that has been largely neglected, and, although of first importance, we have as yet so meagre an understanding of the facts in it. The reasons to which reference is made are too well known to researchers in the

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realm of psychopathia sexualis to need explanation here. They will, however, rapidly diminish from this time on, and of late years no single pen, no other worker, has accomplished more to bring this to pass than the learned, logical and fearless writer who has just given us the book I am now considering.

I cannot pass this point without noticing, as briefly as possible, the nature of some of these difficulties in our author's own words, for I consider the clearing of the ground of such deep-seated prejudices and pruderies is the first step towards a rational knowledge of the facts in sexual psychology. He says: "Yet, although we are on every hand surrounded by the normal manifestations of sex, conscious or unconscious, these manifestations are extremely difficult to observe, and in those cases in which we are best able to observe them, it frequently happens that we are unable to make use of our knowledge. Moreover, even when we have obtained our data, the difficulties—at all events for an English investigator—are by no means overcome. He may take for granted that any serious and precise study of the sexual instinct will not meet with general approval; his work will be misunderstood; his motives will be called in question; among those for whom he is chiefly working he will find indifference. Indeed the pioneer in this field may well count himself happy if he meets with nothing worse than indifference. Hence it is that the present volume will not be published in England, but that, availing myself of the generous sympathy with which my work has been received in America, I have sought the wider medical and scientific audience of the United States. In matters of faith, 'liberty of prophesying' was centuries since eloquently vindicated for Englishmen; the liberty of investigating facts is still called in question, under one pretence or another, and to seek out the most vital facts of life is still in England a perilous task." (Pp. VI-VII.)

Personally, I know something of what has prompted Dr. Ellis to print these words, and more is the pity that every one of them is true, and being true, are we here in America entirely deserving of the handsome compliment they pay to us? I fear not altogether. Our large medical library here, for instance, nearly the largest in the world and under the direct control of the United States government, removes

from its shelves the work I am now reviewing and with some fifty others upon kindred subjects keeps it under lock and key in a separate case in the librarian's private office, where it is more or less of an inconvenience even for *medical men* to consult them. The significance of this is too obvious to require comment here.

Again, a few years ago I published a brief brochure entitled "On a Case of Female Impotency," to be used as a brief for experts in a lawsuit pending in the courts of this country at the time. Dr. Ellis has done me the honor to make use of what I said in that pamphlet in his book now being considered (pp. 172 and 177), but I doubt very much that he has the slightest conception what the career of the printed history of that *single case* of sexual psychology came to be. Apart from anything else, it cost in the matter of civil and military courts some thousands of dollars, volumes of unnecessary scandal, and no end of judicial countenancing of perjuries most flagrant and demoralizing. But with such matters I have to deal later on.

One of the most comprehensive, clear and philosophic handlings of the question of "The Evolution of Modesty" is to be found in this work in the chapter devoted to that subject. "Modesty," says our author, "which may be provisionally defined as an almost instinctive fear prompting to concealment, and usually centering around the sexual processes, while common to both sexes, is more peculiarly feminine, so that it may almost be regarded as the chief secondary sexual character of women on the psychical side." So much for the definition of modesty, but in the treatment of its evolution and how human modesty came to be the human characteristic it now is, is the most intensely interesting research Dr. Ellis places before us. He carries his investigations as far back into history as history goes; he searches for facts and examples along the entire line of animal life, from the highest to the lowest organization; and he fearlessly interrogates the representatives of every scale of human society, from princess to prostitute, and among all nations, races and tribes, and then marshals his facts, and in paragraphs most convincing sets forth the origin and meaning, and the significance of *modesty*, and its place in sexual psychology, sexual pathology and sexual phenomena generally.

It is shown that modesty is primarily based upon *fear*, though the sexual factor, however, is the simplest and most primitive element of modesty, while its manifestation in the female "becomes something more than a mere refusal of the male; it becomes an invitation to the male and is mixed up with his ideas of what is sexually desirable in the female." In other words, the very feeling of shame and the sense of modesty prompted thereby exist, and are *made* to exist, to be overcome. And further on he has shown clearly the relationship existing between modesty and the feeling of disgust, and says "But I am more convinced than ever that the fear of causing disgust—a fear quite distinct from that of losing a sexual lure or breaking a rule of social etiquette—plays a very large part in the modesty of the more modest sex, and in modesty generally." The discussion of this phase of the matter is most highly interesting, as is the dealing with the factor of the ritual element, and especially the idea of ceremonial uncleanliness which even reaches a high development in savagery. Dr. Ellis finds modesty to be among savages far more radical and invincible than among the civilized, and that its subordination as true civilization develops is certain, and through this development it is rendered "a grace of life rather than a fundamental social law of life."

To fully appreciate this classic chapter on modesty, however, one must read and study it from beginning to end, for it will only be through such a careful perusal that the student will come to comprehend the nature of modesty as a whole, and the relations of its various factors. The mechanism of blushing; the true origin and meaning of certain gestures; of the study of the face and of the sacro-pubic region as foci of modesty; shyness, clothing, ornaments on the genitals, and forty other points of interest, are all ably considered here.

Passing to the phenomena of sexual periodicity we are told that "throughout the vegetable and animal worlds the sexual functions are periodic. From the usually annual period of flowering in plants, with its play of sperm-cell and germ-cell, and consequent seed-production, through the varying sexual energies of animals up to the monthly effervescence of the generative organism in woman, seeking not without the shedding of blood for the gratification of

its reproductive function, from first to last we find unflinching evidence of the periodicity of sex." From this premise follows a complete discussion of the facts and factors having to do with this question. The influence of the sun and moon on periodicity; of the matter of rhythm throughout nature; the phenomenon of menstruation, and its counterpart in the male; weekly, fortnightly and annual rhythms in men and other animals in health and disease; seasonal influences; the regularity of periodic feasts and religious observances; and the underlying causes of all these and many kindred questions are entered up with very considerable fullness, and with all the spirit of the true student and scientific investigator. This chapter brings a new light into the entire question of rhythm and rhythmic influences throughout the universe and their interaction and interrelation, their effects and causes, and their manifestations, and it is certainly a very solid contribution to the subject.

Nearly one hundred pages of this work of Dr. Ellis is devoted to that all-important and broad field of psychical phenomena, which he very aptly terms "auto-erotism." As a rule, the uninformed commonly take auto-erotism and the ordinary type of masturbation to be one and the same thing, which, to say the least, is a very unscientific view of the case. Now, to thoroughly understand Dr. Ellis, and to really know what he means by auto-erotic phenomena, I can do no better service to the profession-at-large than to quote him in full here. He says: "By 'auto-erotism' I mean the phenomena of spontaneous sexual emotion generated in the absence of an external stimulus proceeding, directly or indirectly, from another person. In a wide sense, which cannot be wholly ignored here, auto-erotism may be said to include those transformations of repressed sexual activity which are a factor of some morbid conditions as well as the normal manifestation of art and poetry, and, indeed, more or less color the whole of life."

"Such a definition excludes the normal sexual excitement aroused by the presence of a beloved person of the opposite sex; it also excludes the perverted sexuality associated with an attraction to a person of the same sex; it further excludes the manifold forms of erotic fetichism, in which the normal focus of sexual attraction is displaced, and voluptuous emotions are only aroused by some object—

hair, shoes,* garments, etc.—which, to the ordinary lover, are of subordinate—though still, indeed, considerable—importance. The auto-erotic field remains extensive; it ranges from occasional voluptuous day-dreams, in which the subject is entirely passive, to the perpetual unashamed efforts at sexual self-manipulation witnessed among the insane. It also includes, though chiefly as curiosities, those cases in which individuals fall in love with themselves. Among auto-erotic phenomena, or on the borderland, we must further include those religious sexual manifestations for an ideal object, in which we may find evidence in the lives of saints and ecstasies. The typical form of auto-erotism is the occurrence of the sexual orgasm during sleep.”

Thus it will be seen that masturbation covers a very small portion of the auto-erotic field, and the latter, as a whole, is without doubt one of the most important departments of modern medical research. There can be no question as to its importance as a study in the science of sociology. In studying animals—that is, vertebrated animals below man—we find that the practice of ordinary masturbation is very common, and more or less universal. The various methods of performing the act have been frequently observed in apes, monkeys and simians generally; in horses, deer, sheep, camels, bears, cats, dogs, elephants and any number of other forms. It prevails throughout the civilized world now, and has since the dawn of history; and, as Dr. Ellis says, “it is found among the people of nearly every race of which we have any intimate knowledge, however natural the conditions under which men and women may live.”

Space will, however, absolutely forbid my discussing this subject here, or giving any part of the extraordinary details Dr. Ellis has gathered together for us upon this subject. Briefly, it may be said that he has treated the question of the masturbatic act and its numerous variations in very great detail for both sexes, and children of all ages and nationalities. He gives many instances of the very remarkable places, conditions and positions where the act is performed, and a long list of the objects of daily life, and

* In this connection, see my paper “On a Case of Female Impotency” cited above, where a very peculiar case of “shoe-fetichism” is noted (p. 10).

those specially manufactured for the purpose, by which the orgasm is produced or excited. In this discussion the bicycle, the sewing-machine, horseback riding, railroad travel, the "merry-go-round" and many similar devices come in for treatment at the hands of this far-reaching observer.

Then the wider and more general auto-erotic phenomena are next handled with an equally skillful pen, and every shade of the entire question is touched upon, and a most copious reference is made to the literature of the subject, both modern and ancient. In each instance a sufficient number of cases are given to illustrate the points as they are brought forward in turn, and these have all been carefully selected.

After a very complete discussion of the relationships existing among anemia, chlorosis and hysteria, it is held that "we may thus, perhaps, understand why it is that hysteria and anemia are often combined, and why they are both most frequently found in adolescent young women who have yet had no sexual experiences. Chlorosis is a physical phenomenon, hysteria an auto-erotic psychic phenomenon; yet both alike may, to some extent at least, be regarded as sexual aptitude showing itself in extreme and pathological forms." (P. 164.)

In the third section of the work the widespread prevalence of masturbation is taken up, and many questions relating thereto. After producing a great many opinions on the subject the universality of the practice all over the world is clearly established. This applies to both sexes and all ages at one time of life's career or another. It is held that in a very large proportion of cases its harmful effects have been very greatly over-estimated; in a few others it is of positive benefit; while in a considerable number it produces mental and physical impairment. "After adolescence I think there can be no doubt that masturbation is more common in women than in men. Men have by this time mostly adopted some method of sexual gratification with the opposite sex; women are to a much larger extent shut out from such gratification." It is pointed out "that if masturbation often does no more harm than sexual intercourse, it usually does less good." Its most harmful effect is the production in the vast majority of cases of a marked

neurasthenia, especially where it is committed by temperaments wholly unfitted both by heredity and constitution to follow the practice. Its moral, social and other aspects are very fully entered upon, as well as the evidence for and against its being a primary cause of insanity or any other disease.

The three appendices to this volume, furnished, as I have said, by Mr. F. H. Pérry-Coste, are of great value; but, as I intend to touch upon these in another connection, I will only give their captions here. In the first he deals with "The Influence of Menstruation on the Position of Women"; in the second with "Sexual Periodicity of Men"; and in the third and last, with "The Auto-Erotic Factor in Religion."

Personally, I was greatly interested by the discussion of this last topic, and for one reason in particular, for when I published my brochure "On a Case of Female Impotency" I took occasion to point out therein what Rosse had done before me when he said in his "Sexual Hypochondriasis and Perversion of the Genesic Instinct" that "many hypochondriacs pass for religious when they are only suffering from sexual neurasthenia; and it is a fact known to physicians that so-called religious and erotic debauchery often go together." (P. 12; of Rosse's paper, pp. 18, 19.) It appeared to me at the time that there were not a dozen scientific men in Washington who knew of this well-established fact, and it seemed simply to have the effect of directing the fire of all the old maids, the church people and others against me; an attack that was more amusing to me than it was dignified or scientific on the part of the assailants.

Now Pérry-Coste brings forward simply an overwhelming mass of evidence establishing this fact; but the best case of all he cites, demonstrating the relation between auto-erotism and religious exaltation, is that of a nun. It is recorded thus: "Recently Vallon and Marie have published a valuable study of religious psychoses ('Des Psychoses Religieuses,' *Archives de Neurologie*, 1897); one of their cases masturbated herself with a crucifix, believing that she thus sanctified the act." (P. 234.) It strikes me that this is a very fair illustrative example.

It is perfectly safe to predict, I think, that the appear-

ance of this work of Dr. Ellis here in this country will exert a powerful tendency in widening the views of the medical profession in the fields of sexual psychology, while it will prove a very valuable addition to the libraries of all those who have already informed themselves in such matters.

From a medical point of view, as well as a socialistic one, it seems to me to be far wiser, when we have scientifically demonstrated the widespread existence of moral infirmity of any kind whatever to get at the bottom of it, and treat the cause—in fact, cure the ulcer—than it is to persecute the investigators of the facts and continually attempt to hide their good works in dark places.

