St. Anthony Mary Claret

EFFECTIVE BALM, OR HOLY WEEK

Bálsamo eficaz

From the Spanish of the Colección de opúsculos, vol. III (Barcelona, 1860)

English translation

Contributed to Mind of the Church by a friend of the library who wishes to remain anonymous

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About this translation

Translated from *Bálsamo eficaz para curar un sinnúmero de enfermedades de alma y cuerpo, ó sea Semana Santa para enmendarse ó preservarse del mal máximo y peste desoladora de la juventud*, in the *Colección de opúsculos* of Claret, vol. III (Barcelona: Librería Religiosa, 1860). The translation is complete.

The notes give the references to Claret's sources and the notes he printed himself; the modern editors' commentary and the translator's own remarks are not reproduced.

Effective Balm for Curing Countless Diseases of Soul and Body, or a Holy Week for Amending or Preserving Oneself from the Greatest Evil and Desolating Plague of Youth

Notice

This little work is called *Holy Week* because the seven days of the week are consecrated to Most Holy Mary in memory of her seven sorrows. Each day mentions one of the sorrows that this heavenly Lady suffered, and asks of her, by the merits of that sorrow, the grace to sin no more, especially during that same day. For it must be borne in mind that sins are so many swords that pierce the breast and heart of this divine Mother.[1]

Prayer to the Most Holy Virgin

O Virgin and Mother of God, I give myself to you as your child; and in honour and glory of your purity I offer you my soul, body, powers and senses, and I beg you to obtain for me the grace never to commit any sin. Amen, Jesus. Three Hail Marys.

My Mother, here you have your child.\ My Mother, here you have your child.\ My Mother, here you have your child.

In you, my sweetest Mother, I have put my trust; I shall never be confounded.

To the Fathers Confessors, to Fathers of Families, and to the Directors of Schools and of Other Establishments for Children

The reading of the works left us by the distinguished Tissot, Duvei, Dubreyne, Doussin, Frank, Salzmun, Campe, Goutieb-Wogel, etc., and the long experience I have had in directing children and young people, oblige me to write the present *Holy Week* and to dedicate it to your zeal and vigilance. I do so in order that you may apply it, as a most effective and healing means, to the youth or child at the moment you come to know that he is unhappily infected with the plague of masturbation or onanism,[1] which does man so much harm, above all in his early years. I am certain and sure that, if they knew the bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal harm that this abominable vice brings upon them, they would not let themselves be so easily deceived by the seducing companion or by their own passion. Nor, dazzled by a false and momentary pleasure, would they throw themselves without a thought into an abyss of physical and moral evils, which, if they are not cut off from the beginning, will become past remedy, dragging their bodies to the grave before their time, and perhaps their souls to hell for all eternity.

The purpose of this little work, then, and my reason for dedicating it to you, is that you may keep it at hand and have the child or youth whom you believe infected with the plague of masturbation read it and meditate on it. I dare to assure you that whoever of them reads attentively what this little book contains, and practises the spiritual remedies of hygiene that it prescribes, will correct his vice and reform his habits, with great advantages for soul and body. And although it is true that the end I set myself in writing this little work was to cure or remedy the infected, still it will not be out of place sometimes to give it to a chaste youth to read,

so that he may better keep himself in continence and chastity. In this you will do him a still greater service, for, as St. Thomas says, it is a greater grace to keep or preserve one from falling than to raise up one who has fallen.

But I dedicate this little work not only to priests, fathers of families and directors of children, but also to zealous and virtuous young men. To them the practice of what it teaches cannot fail to be very profitable; for it is well known that children and young people among themselves, very often and with too much freedom, communicate and do incredible things, which they cleverly hide and conceal from their parents and elders. Many go about this matter with such hypocrisy that parents think they have angels in their children, when they are lewdness and lust itself. And the worst is that, falling into the illnesses and miseries that follow upon such wickedness, they deny to the wise and experienced physician the true cause that has brought them to such a state, and sometimes die victims of their own falsehood, because they prevent the remedy aimed at the cause of their illness from being applied to them. And, a terrible thing, they deceive not only the physician of the body but also the physician of the soul, I mean the confessor. Many hide their shameful sins at the tribunal of penance, add sacrilege to sacrilege, and are damned. Yet while, to the great detriment and harm of their bodies and souls, they hide from parents, directors, physicians and confessors the vice that rules them, even when questioned about it, with the utmost brazenness and boldness they talk about it, without being asked, with their friends and comrades. That is why I have said that zealous young men will perhaps have more opportunity to apply to their companions, as charitable Samaritans, this precious *Balm* compounded of oil and wine. (I give this little work that name because it is made of the wine of examples and physical remedies and of the oil of Religion.) They may pour it on the wounds opened by their impurities, wounds that leave them half alive, to use the phrase of the Gospel in the parable of the unhappy man who fell among robbers. His pitiful condition may very well be applied to the youth who has fallen into the hands of these vices, which leave him wholly dead in soul and only half alive in body. And even this life of the body he will soon lose, if he does not amend, as will be seen in the examples we shall relate.

Your most affectionate servant,

THE LOVER OF YOUTH.

Introduction

Experience has taught us how wise and timely was the warning the apostle St. Paul gave the faithful of Corinth, telling them that Satan himself sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). For we often see his followers, or wicked men, doing the same in our own days: under the pretext and cloak \[*capa*, literally “cape”\] of virtue they persecute virtue itself and spread vice, which is exactly the work of devils. And so do some who are falsely prudent, or prudent according to the flesh and not according to God. I mean by this that perhaps some follower of the devil, or someone who fancies himself prudent, on seeing that this little book has come out into public view, will say with a cloak of zeal that it was not fitting to publish it, because its reading may give scandal to someone.

To this I answer that such a person must be either very ignorant or very malicious. Ignorant, because he does not know what goes on among children and young people, as though he had forgotten what he heard and saw when he was a child and a youth. However watchful and careful his parents and elders were, perhaps they were not enough to prevent him from coming to know these things and falling into this snare, from which he might perhaps have been kept if he had had the good fortune to read some book like the one I now bring out. If, then, he lacked a good mentor to advise him how to preserve himself, let him not wish to deprive others of the good fortune that did not fall to him. The evil is too grave and too common for us to go on sleeping any longer and not seek an effective remedy for it. And let us not deceive ourselves \[*no hay que hacerse ilusiones*, “there is no making illusions for oneself”\]: either this horrible gangrene is cured, or it will soon corrupt the human race, as in the days of Noah. But if this objection is not the child of ignorance or pedantry,

it will be the child of malice. For experience has taught me that those most infected with impurity are the most zealous critics of those who speak of this vice in order to bring about its amendment. While they speak of it at every moment to spread it, they cannot bear others to speak of it when the aim is to correct and restrain it. Since they do the devil's work and are his ministers, they cannot tolerate souls being warned and preserved from this wickedness.

But I will tell you, beloved reader, what Jesus Christ told the disciples about how to behave towards the Jews who criticized his divine teaching: *Sinite illos, caeci sunt*: take no notice of them, for they are blind. I say the same to you, beloved reader: if some criticize this little work, pay not the least attention to them, for ignorance or their vices blind them miserably. Read it yourself and profit from all that is written in it; for the soundest and most upright intention dictated all of it to me. And if, in spite of this, someone is not grateful for it, I hope God will be. He knows that I have set myself no other end than his greater honour and glory and the good of my fellow men.

Nevertheless, it is good for you to know that all I say I have taken from authors known for their piety and learning, whose works are approved and praised by authority and well received by the public. And if they criticize the way in which I put this matter into plain language, it seems to me that they have still less reason. For, as I said above, I have written this little work only for those to whom I have dedicated it, and not for everyone indiscriminately. Even so, if a copy should fall into the hands of some innocent person, I do not believe it will scandalize him or excite him to sin. On the contrary, I am very sure that on reading this little work and seeing this vice painted in its own colours of ugliness and horror, far from letting himself be dazzled by it, he will turn away from this monstrous sin as from the sight of the serpent, as the Holy Spirit says.

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[1] Lk 2:35.

[2] Gen 38:8–10.

Sunday, First Day

First Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin heard from the mouth of Simeon that a sword of sorrow was to pierce her heart at seeing her Son persecuted. In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Observations of Physicians and Philosophers

Doctor Goutieb-Wogel says: He who masturbates loses imperceptibly the moral faculties he had received. His look takes on a certain brutal, stupid, lascivious, dull, sad and soft character. Sloth masters him, and he becomes incapable of every intellectual function. He loses presence of mind; he is bewildered, flustered and uneasy in company; he is caught unprepared and at a loss for an answer, even to a child; his weakened soul gives way under the smallest burden. His memory is more and more impaired; he cannot grasp the commonest things or link together the most trivial ideas. The most developed faculties and the most sublime talents are brought to nothing at once. Knowledge acquired before is almost wholly wiped out; the most exquisite intelligence is blunted and bears no more fruit; liveliness, energy and the other qualities of the soul are lost; the power of the imagination ceases… Disquiet, fear and dread, the only affections that find room in his heart, wipe out all pleasant feelings from his spirit.

The last crises of melancholy and the most frightful suggestions of despair commonly end by hastening the death of these unhappy ones, or reduce them to the most complete apathy, lowering them to the condition of the dullest animals, so that they keep the human species only in their shape. Very often, too, madness and frenzy show themselves at once.

Doctor Frank says that masturbators are not only a burden to society, but are also dangerous. For this reason this famous physician invites governments to keep the most active watch over them. Liuran says that it is the capital plague, and Semea that it is the greatest evil.

Mr. Devay says: Among his principal duties, the father of a family has that of watching over the preservation of his children's innocence, and of keeping them from every occasion of corruption, principally from bad books, paintings, prints and obscene figures, and from persons, houses and places of prostitution. These same should be the aims of a good government; then there will be fewer pale and livid faces in all the populous cities. It is very just and reasonable to deprive them of a pleasure that is the hotbed of corruption. This is certainly important for the interest of a population and for the health of peoples, and above all in view of their moral and intellectual worth.

Example: A Young Man's Declaration about Himself, Published by the Director of the Salzmann School

"At last Tissot's book came into my hands; but, alas, too late. I read in it, and I am left as though struck by lightning. My eyes are opened again, and I am filled with terror and dread.

"By that time I was already worn out, reduced to a skeleton; people thought me in the last stage of consumption. Yet I had not even suspected the true cause of my decline, but at that moment I could recognize it. 'How cruel and barbarous', I said to myself, 'my parents, my teachers and my friends have been, not to warn me of the danger that goes with masturbation, nor to put Tissot's works into my hands!' Or rather: 'What great ignorance still reigns about this vice and its consequences!'… I fell into a kind of melancholy that made me suffer horribly, and I resolved to free myself from the most hateful of vices. The undertaking was difficult, but not impossible, for onanism had lost all its attractions for me.

"Lament with me my sad state and the blindness of men who throw themselves into such frightful misfortunes. My intellectual powers have grown extraordinarily weak. My understanding is blunted, and at present I am incapable of following an argument. My memory, too, has weakened greatly, or rather I have lost it completely. This state is all the more deplorable because God had granted me the happiest gifts, so much so that my teachers and acquaintances formed the most flattering hopes of me and believed that one day I should be a scholar. And not only do I find myself unable to apply myself to intellectual work; I can bear muscular exercise even less. My whole body is enervated and without strength, and I am so weak and fleshless that hardly anything is left of me but skin and bones. I look like a skeleton, and my appearance causes horror. But my illness is not limited to this state of utter weakness; I also suffer very sharp pains without intermission. What makes my state more deplorable still is the melancholy that has seized me, and the certainty of having gone against the purposes of the Creator, making myself useless at once for the reproduction of my fellow men and for the education of youth. This conviction torments me much more than bodily pain. Many times I should have yielded to the temptation to put an end to my existence, if reason and Religion, the only comfort left to me, had not held me back."

Maxim

The Lord slew Onan, because he did a detestable thing (your sin, masturbator).

Reflections

Ah, young man who read this! Learn your lesson from another man's head \[*escarmienta en cabeza ajena*: learn from another's misfortune, not your own\]. Consider what this young man who makes this frank declaration was, what he is, and what he will be!…

He was a robust, handsome lad, talented and of the best gifts, who promised the most flattering hopes. But through this brutal pleasure he has become like a rotten orange, good for nothing but to be thrown away.

He is an animated skeleton; he seems to live only to suffer and to pay in part for the brutal and abominable gratifications he has given his body. His life is no longer living, but a long dying.

He will be a victim of his crime, a dweller in the churchyard \[*campo santo*, "holy field"\], and perhaps one of the damned in hell, especially if he does not go to confession, or does not confess well. For this sin leads people to make bad confessions, either through shame at telling the sins or because the confession is not accompanied by the sorrow it requires.

Resolution

To resolve in all earnest not to do, say or think anything immodest, for love of the Most Holy Trinity, especially during this day.

Physical Remedy

To remove the causes that incline one to immodesty, such as pastries and sweet foods. Not to sleep in a soft bed or cover oneself too much, for the body ought to be cool and only the feet warm. It is also good not to sleep much. It is likewise necessary to fight that tendency to rest, that apathy and boredom with everything, that is often seen in young people who give themselves to this sensuality; for which reason they should be obliged always to be busy with something.

Spiritual Remedy

To walk in the presence of God. In front of your father, mother or teacher you would surely not dare to commit such wickedness; that is why you hide from them. Well, think that you can hide from them, but not from God. The Lord is looking at you, and are you not ashamed to commit such wickedness in his divine presence!

Do you not fear his power and justice, which can take your life and cast you into hell, as he has done with others?

Now, prostrate at the feet of Most Holy Mary, this exercise shall be ended with the following

Prayer

O Virgin and Mother of God, I give myself to you as your child; and in honour and glory of your purity I offer you my soul, body, powers and senses, and I beg you to obtain for me the grace never to commit any sin. Amen, Jesus. Three Hail Marys.

My Mother, here you have your child.\ My Mother, here you have your child.\ My Mother, here you have your child.

In you, my sweetest Mother, I have put my trust; I shall never be confounded.

Then the following shall be prayed:

Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin

Sancta Maria, *ora pro nobis.*\ Sancta Dei Genitrix, *ora.*\ Sancta Virgo Virginum, *ora.*\ Mater crucifixa, *ora.*\ Mater dolorosa, *ora.*\ Mater lacrymosa, *ora.*\ Mater afflicta, *ora.*\ Mater derelicta, *ora.*\ Mater desolata, *ora.*\ Mater filio orbata, *ora.*\ Mater gladio transverberata, *ora.*\ Mater aerumnis confecta, *ora.*\ Mater angustiis repleta, *ora.*\ Mater cruci corde affixa, *ora.*\ Mater maestissima, *ora.*\ Fons lacrymarum, *ora.*\ Cumulus

passionum, *ora.*\ Speculum patientiae, *ora.*\ Rupes constantiae, *ora.*\ Anchora confidentiae, *ora.*\ Refugium derelictorum, *ora.*\ Clipeus oppressorum, *ora.*\ Debellatrix incredulorum, *ora.*\ Solatium miserorum, *ora.*\ Medicina languentium, *ora.*\ Fortitudo debilium, *ora.*\ Portus naufragantium, *ora.*\ Sedatio procellarum, *ora.*\ Recursus maerentium, *ora.*\ Terror insidiantium, *ora.*\ Thesaurus fidelium, *ora.*\ Oculus Prophetarum, *ora.*\ Baculus Apostolorum, *ora.*\ Corona Martyrum, *ora.*\ Lumen Confessorum, *ora.*\ Margarita Virginum, *ora.*\ Consolatio Viduarum, *ora.*\ Laetitia Sanctorum omnium, *ora.*

And at the end shall be said:

℣. Ora pro nobis, Virgo dolorosissima.\ ℟. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

Oremus. Deus, in cujus passione, secundum Simeonis prophetiam, dulcissimam animam gloriosae Virginis et Matris Mariae doloris gladius pertransivit: concede propitius; ut qui doloris ejus venerando recolimus, passionis tuae effectum felicem consequamur. Qui vivis et regnas, etc. Amen.

Monday, Second Day

Second Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin saw her beloved Son Jesus persecuted by Herod. In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Observations of Physicians and Philosophers

Impurity is like a well: whoever falls into it does not get out, unless he makes use of a ladder, or they throw him a rope that he can tie well round himself, and they pull him out from above. Such is impurity: it is a deep well from which no one gets out except by the ladder of reason or the rope of religion. But it is precisely this sin that most damages reason, and at the same time the one that most makes people lose religion. Happy, though, are those who through this vice have not yet lost these two anchors, which give much hope: I believe they will not be lost, but will amend.

Mr. Tissot says: A sick man described to me in one of his letters how hard it is to gain the victory over this vice, and spoke to me in these terms: “I remember your warnings and advice, and so I fight and struggle, and I will not let myself be overcome.” Mr. J. L. Doussin says: So great is the power of onanism that correcting it must be considered next to impossible \[*punto menos que imposible*, “a point less than impossible”\], principally when its victims, deaf to the voice of reason, hear only that of the senses. Ceaselessly pursued by the desire for this unlawful enjoyment, they find themselves hurled into an abyss.

Example: A Young Man’s Declaration about Himself to the Learned Physician J. L. Doussin, to See Whether He Could Find a Remedy; the Physician Publishes It, Concealing the Young Man’s Name, to Undeceive and Warn the Young

“I was by nature healthy and robust, without ever having had the slightest indisposition, and I am sure that my health would never have been impaired, as it is today, if I could have foreseen the fatal consequences of onanism. This unhappy passion, whose habit I contracted without knowing how, developed by the liveliness of my imagination and increased by my temperament, as ardent as it was precocious, has caused my ruin.

“I gave myself to the indulgence of this passion without any consideration, and forgot or did not think of the consequences it might have. So I did not reflect on the sad emotions that precede and bring it on, nor on the individual impressions that go with it, nor even on the inevitable prostration that always follows it.

“Alas! Given over to my solitary and extravagant pleasures, I soon felt a general fatigue throughout my body, more or less severe, mostly accompanied by malaise and dejection when the act was over. Soon I was quite dried up, consumed by a continuous, slightly inflammatory fever, which ended in sweats so abundant that they brought me to the highest degree of wasting. Then I sought the help of medicine; and moderate exercise and a good regimen having been prescribed for me, I quickly recovered. But some time afterwards I had the misfortune to begin my infamous itch again, and the fever returned, accompanied and followed by more or less abundant sweats, often by constipation, and at other times by diarrhoea that used to last eight or ten days. My hands trembled, my eyes were extremely sensitive to light, and after the least emotion I fell into an apathy from which I could hardly come out. In sleep I was tormented by frightful dreams that made me wake in terror. I was more inclined to solitude than ever, because I knew my misfortune, and it was impossible for me to find the least distraction, not even in the studies I was fondest of, because I had almost completely lost my memory. I also wholly neglected my cleanliness and my dress. All these symptoms preceded a putrid fever, from which I fortunately escaped, though the convalescence was painful and exceedingly slow.

“After suffering great fatigue for six years, I began to suffer abundant sweats although I took no exercise at all and kept the most complete rest, and at the same time a continuous ophthalmia came upon me. Next I suffered a skin eruption that covered my whole face, accompanied by considerable swelling of the salivary glands. During digestion, which was always painful, I felt a burning thirst and continual disturbance, accompanied by colic and gripings that ended in a copious stool of badly digested food, and this happened shortly after eating.

“All my intellectual faculties grew weaker day by day. Light was unbearable to me; the least intellectual work, reading, the smallest occupation, everything tired and wearied me. I became dazed, stupid and taciturn; I was annoyed at the slightest cause, and fell asleep at once whenever I sat down for a while.” These and other things this victim of masturbation, or of impure acts, goes on relating about himself.

Maxim

The sin of impurity makes a man the devil’s slave.

Reflection

Ah, Christian! Stop and consider a little your high dignity, and do not throw yourself down and degrade yourself for a brief pleasure. The Christian in grace is a child of God the Father, a brother of Jesus Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit; a child of Most Holy Mary and an heir of heaven; he has the Saints for friends and the Angels for servants. But by sin he loses all these titles and becomes a slave of the devil, a dweller in hell, a companion of the devils and the damned, and eternally unhappy. And is it possible, Christian, that for a brief pleasure you are willing to lose so great a good and hurl yourself into so great an evil!…

Stop… see that a brief enjoying is followed by an eternal suffering \[*por un breve gozar se sigue un eterno penar*, a rhyming proverb\].

Resolution

I resolve to abstain from doing, saying and thinking anything immodest, for love of Jesus Christ, especially during this day.

Physical Remedy

The physician Doussin says: Among the proximate and immediate causes of solitary vices the first place goes to the teachings of idle and depraved people, certain postures and movements, licentious conversations, the reading of novels and obscene books, the sight of immodest paintings and statues, the theatre, and

whatever may give rise to lascivious ideas. From all these things the chaste man must keep away in order to preserve himself, and the impure in order to amend.

Spiritual Remedy

To make the sign of the cross on the forehead or on the heart when some temptation comes or troubles you; and if you are alone, to sign yourself, saying and making the three crosses: By the sign of ✠ the holy cross, deliver us ✠ from our enemies, O Lord ✠ our God.

The exercise shall be ended as on the first day, with the Prayer to Most Holy Mary and the Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin (pages 80 and 81 of the original, given above at the end of Sunday).

Tuesday, Third Day

Third Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin lost her most precious Son.[1] In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Religion and the Counsels of a Good Friend

A young man says: “Until the age of fifteen I enjoyed the most complete peace of mind and the sweetest happiness. Full of affection and respect for my parents, and wishing to make myself every day more worthy of their kindness, I applied myself to my duties with such eagerness that I always obtained a good result, so that at the end of each year I won the first prize. This lasted until a youth of my own age taught me about onanism. Wretch!… He needed an accomplice, or, better said, a victim! I failed in my duty, for passion so mastered me that, although I knew all the danger to which I exposed my life, I did not cease to satisfy it.

“Religion, Religion alone, was able to win a complete victory over my senses, which did not heed even the love of self-preservation. Fortunately I had been engaged in so horrible a business for only eight months when I told the secret to one of my friends and companions. He spoke to me of the remarkable change in my colour, and told me he had witnessed many nervous attacks during which I lost consciousness. This companion, who was indeed virtuous, and who succeeded in making me follow in his footsteps, was well rewarded by the advantages his excellent health gave him and by his progress in his studies, which won him the esteem of the professors and the affection of his parents. This excellent young man, whom some unfortunates of the stamp of the one whose perfidious counsel may cost me my life had not been able to overcome, made me such serious reflections on the enormity of the crime of which I appeared guilty before God that, taking up those ideas, as pleasing to the good as they are frightening to the wicked, my complete conversion took place at once. Ah! Time was already pressing; for since then I have enjoyed only very delicate health. What would have happened if divine Providence, which I thank daily, had not given me a friend who took so much interest in my lot? For only eight months did I harbour in my breast this criminal capital vice, enemy of the human race, and it caused me nervous pains, indigestion, loss of memory, indifference and even aversion to everything good, with a thousand other ills and misfortunes that I know of and here keep silent. What would have happened had I continued for some time? Alas! By this hour my body would already be eaten by worms, and my soul tormented by the devils in hell; for although the impure do not think of it, and hardly believe it, that place of torments is where one ends up.”

Example: A Young Man’s Declaration about Himself to the Famous Physician J. L. Doussin, Who Publishes It as a Warning to Children and Young People

“The time when I began to give myself to masturbation reaches back, so to speak, to my most tender childhood. From that age, and without having the least idea of what distinguishes the sexes, I gave myself to

certain lewd practices that I repeated when I wished, and that produced in me a kind of pollution. By this means I obtained only very imperfect sensations, but sufficient to have a notable effect on my machine.

“My parents did not fail to notice this pastime of mine, but they were very far from attributing it to its true cause. Having reached the age of thirteen or fourteen, the time of my puberty, a companion taught me the real way of carrying out masturbation. From that moment until the age of seventeen I did not cease to give myself to my impurities. At first I indulged very little; but before long it came to be a frenzy, an unspeakable fury, for there were days when I repeated the act four times in the morning and as many at night.

“It happened that at this time I had a purulent discharge, with all the symptoms and pains that accompany venereal gonorrhoea, although I had never, never touched a woman. I was treated as though I had that disease, and I was cured.

“In spite of the painful lesson I had just received, I did not on that account stop masturbating for another four months, though with greater moderation. At last, at that time, when I was finishing my infamous manoeuvres, I noticed some symptoms of illness that frightened me greatly. I began to feel an extraordinary weakness in all the muscles of the legs, accompanied by heaviness of the head, with throbbing followed by dizziness. Then I felt painful and unpleasant sensations in the palms of my hands. Not only had my growth or development stopped, but the whole surface of my body was attacked by alopecia (loss of the hair of the head and of the hair that covers the other parts of the body).

“It was then that Tissot’s work was presented and given to me. I could hardly explain the effect that reading this book produced in me when I recognized that the symptoms described in it fitted me perfectly: among others, unfitness for every kind of work, the mania of wanting always to be alone and of loathing company, the pustules that filled my face, the curvature of the rachis (spine), the loss and weakening of sight, etc., etc.

“It cost me much labour to forget my bad habits, in spite of the firm resolution I had taken, because I masturbated involuntarily in my sleep. There was no means I did not use to prevent my nocturnal pollutions: I tied my hands, my body, etc. At present I remain, of my own will, in a state of complete tranquillity… In the six years that have passed since I gave up the vice I have grown an inch, I have recovered my memory, and I can occupy myself continually and profitably with whatever pleases or instructs me.

“But what afflicts me at present, and for which I should like to find some remedy, is a trembling of the hands, with coldness even in the dog days; black teeth, with the gums drawn back, almost loosened from their sockets; pimples have broken out in my mouth and on my face that fill with pus; and finally, the state of my stomach worries me, because my digestion is slow and my mouth often feels pasty.”

Maxim

The sin of impurity hastens a man’s death.

Reflection

It is a truth of faith that sin brought death into this world, as St. Paul says;[1] and the same holy Apostle assures us that sin is a stimulus, or goad, or spur that hastens death.[2] But if this is said of every sin, how much more must it be said of the sin of impurity, which upsets the humours, diminishes the vital spirits and consumes the strength?

And even if there were not these philosophical reasons, we know from Sacred Scripture that for this sin God sends sudden death upon those who give themselves to it. Er and Onan were struck dead at the very moment they were sinning.[3] And let the impure man understand that this vice is called onanism because it imitates Onan. Let the sinner fear, then, lest what happened to him should happen to himself… to be suddenly struck dead and damned. Ah, how many examples are read in sacred and profane histories of persons who have had

an untimely death through this sin!… Fear, sinner, lest the same should happen to you.

Resolution

I resolve to abstain from doing, saying and thinking anything immodest, for love of the Holy Spirit, whose temple I am, especially during this day.[1]

Physical Remedy

The physician Doussin says (p. 180 of his work): "Among the most effective means and remedies must be counted ceaseless occupation, and living in the company of some amiable and virtuous person, and, if possible, never losing sight of him day or night. But Religion is the best and most powerful means of obtaining rest for the imagination. I know this to be so, and those sick of this vice have themselves assured me of it."

Spiritual Remedy

To make ejaculatory prayers the moment temptation appears, saying: Lord, do not take your Holy Spirit from me.[1] My God, help me. My Jesus, protect me.

The exercise shall be ended as on the first day, with the Prayer to Most Holy Mary and the Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin (pages 80 and 81 of the original, given above at the end of Sunday).

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[2] The finding in the Temple (Lk 2:41–50).

[3] Rom 5:12.

[4] 1 Cor 15:56, "The sting of death is sin" (*stimulus autem mortis peccatum est*).

[5] Gen 38:7–10.

[6] 1 Cor 6:19.

[1] Ps 50(51):13, *Spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.*

Wednesday, Fourth Day

Fourth Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin found her Son worn out, with the cross upon his shoulders, in the Street of Bitterness. In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Observations of Physicians and Philosophers

Tissot, Salzmann, Goutieb-Wogel, Campe and other famous authors cite a great number of boys and girls who by various means had come to masturbate from their most tender childhood, and who, continuing in this abominable vice, without knowing it dug their own graves.

The famous J. L. Doussin says: "A child of four or five, whom chance taught this way of destroying himself, does indeed die a victim of his few years, for he has done nothing but yield to an inclination whose danger it was impossible for him to judge. But a youth of sixteen or seventeen, should he hope for any indulgence? Who will not blame him for not having renounced this shameful vice from the moment he noticed his health declining? Besides, he knows so well how blameworthy that vice is that he does not know how to hide his baseness, and believes that all the persons with whom he is obliged to keep up relations know of it. Hence the timidity seen when he answers the questions of his parents or teachers, whom he hardly dares to look at and whose presence he carefully tries to avoid. Happy the one who can still blush at this habit, as painful as it is strange, for he will not remain sunk in the mire of this vice: soon he will remember it only to abhor it, and the virtue he abandoned for some moments will guide him anew. He will surely find himself well rewarded when

he sees vanish for ever from his brow, serene once before, the traces of the crime that were marked on it."

Doussin says: "Onanism makes its victims lose all they had received as human beings in the way of moral faculties. It gives them a brutish, foolish, sad, cowardly and lazy exterior, and makes them incapable of any work that requires the slightest operation of the understanding."

Mr. Devay expresses the comfort he hopes to have in seeing masturbating boys amended by means of the sacrament of Penance and first Communion. Who will not recognize the beneficial power of a priest's counsel to a child or youth who confides to him his secret, which he did not know how to tell even his own parents? And who will deny that that first and edifying Communion, for which purity of life is required, can avert these deplorable excesses for ever?

Example: A Young Man's Declaration about Himself, Which the Learned and Charitable J. L. Doussin-Dubreuil Publishes to Undeceive Youth

"I am unhappily among the number of the victims whose innocence has been sacrificed to the bad counsel of a corrupt youth. To my harm I witnessed in a school the excesses of onanism, and, encouraged by the example of those around me, I took pleasure in imitating them, because like them I did not know the fatal consequences of our brutish inclination. For a long time we had grown familiar with these horrors. If one of us, better informed than the others, had shown us all the dangers this habit brings with it, that would no doubt have been enough for me to give up my guilty practices altogether. But, on the contrary, since I did not know the danger, I continued them until I was fifteen and a half, and what had been no more than a simple desire turned into an imperious need. To check this detestable habit I was given Tissot's work to read; and after examining it I recognized the whole depth of the abyss that I had opened at my feet with my own hands. Astonished then and full of dread at such reading, I obtained your letters, persuaded that the more the facts were multiplied, the stronger the emotion would be. To this, I confess, I owe the ease I have found in renouncing every kind of manual provocation. In spite of my libertine gratifications I have kept my flesh; but I have constant dark rings under my eyes, my eyes are sunk deep in their sockets, and I have an earthy, yellowish pallor. Wherever I go I imagine that people read in my face my inclination to masturbation. I feel a fixed pain below the scrotum; I have frequent pollutions in sleep that exhaust me; my digestion is slow, laborious and bad;… my face is covered with large pimples, as painful as they are hard and crusted; nervous affections have a powerful hold on my imagination… I still hope to recover my health, or at least to keep what little remains; this would be all the more extraordinary a blessing for me because my excesses lasted four years running. Finally, having the firm resolution to respect myself and never again abuse such a pleasure, I hope that the involuntary nocturnal pollutions, which still persist and torment me, will cease. Is there not some means to check them? Do me the favour of telling me of it, and I shall consider myself happy the day I see myself restored."

Examples of Two Unfortunates Who Did Not Declare Their Vice of Masturbation to the Physician Doussin

"Among the epileptics I am attending at present there is a youth of seventeen whom I suspect of masturbating a great deal. In spite of having put some questions to him, I have not yet succeeded in getting the truth from him. If he reads this work, as I hope he will, he will learn from the examples I cite that to obtain a complete cure of an illness it is absolutely indispensable to make the cause that produced it cease.

"In my treatise on phlegms or viscosities I cite the history of a boy who died at the age of thirteen in the midst of terrible convulsions, much like those of epilepsy, after an agony of ninety-six hours. The kind of efforts he had made for a long time to expectorate, and the nature of the sputum, ash-grey in colour and of a viscous consistency unusual in early life, made me suspect that his illness was due to many excesses in

masturbation. This was shown besides by his skin, whose extreme dryness only a violent cause could have produced by driving the perspiration back to the interior; for this child was idolized by his parents, and had been given no work nor anything else that could cause him fatigue."

Maxim

The sin of impurity makes a man undergo a terrible judgment.

Reflections

Think that you must die… think that this vice hastens your death… think that all the sooner you will find yourself at the tribunal of God, and he will say to you: Give me an account of your stewardship \[*dame cuenta de tu negociación*, "give me an account of your trading"\]…[1] God has given you body, soul, life, health and a thousand other things, so that you may keep his law, know him, love him and serve him… and you, what have you done?… What account will you give God when, instead of living well, you have done nothing but sin?… If he condemned that servant who did not trade nor gain with his talent, what a terrible judgment will he pass on you, who not only have not gained with the talents of the powers and senses he entrusted to you, but have abused them and offended God with them?[2] If the tree that bore no fruit was cut down and thrown into the fire, what judgment awaits you, who instead of bearing the fruits of good works produce nothing but sins?…[3] Woe to you!!!…

Resolution

I resolve to abstain from doing, saying or thinking anything immodest, for love of Mary, our Lady, Virgin and Mother of purity, especially during this day.

Physical Remedy

The physician Doussin says (p. 180) that a powerful remedy for curing the plague of onanism is the continual vigilance of superiors, reproofs, counsels, the presence or the reading of other beings made unhappy by this vice, and making them understand that they are making themselves ugly, sick, killing and damning themselves.

Spiritual Remedy

To commend oneself to Most Holy Mary. To pray the Rosary every day. To say often that prayer *O Virgin and Mother of God*, and the *Hail Mary* when the clock strikes, and to make ejaculatory prayers when some temptation comes.

The exercise shall be ended as on the first day, with the Prayer to Most Holy Mary and the Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin (pages 80 and 81 of the original, given above at the end of Sunday).

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[1] Lk 16:2, *Redde rationem villicationis tuae.*

[2] Mt 25:14–30.

[3] Mt 3:10; 7:19; compare Lk 13:6–9.

Thursday, Fifth Day

Fifth Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin saw her most loving Son crucified and dead. In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Observations of Physicians and Philosophers

The famous physician J. L. Doussin says that those who masturbate cause themselves these harms and injuries: shy, dull, weak eyes, sometimes inflamed, ringed and moist; swollen eyelids; a decrepit, yellowish and wasted face; lassitude that rest does not dispel; slow digestion; constipation; thick, whitish and often foul-smelling urine; nausea and at times vomiting of viscous matter; great weakness in the loins and legs; continual shivering; a hoarse, weak or harsh voice; excessive sweats without any preceding exertion; the skin almost always dry and earthy; a little cough without expectoration; frequent sighs and yawns. These are the physical effects that result from the habit of onanism, effects that in their turn become the cause of the disorders that the moral life of such persons undergoes. It is also observed that the least difficulty frightens them; that they are at ease nowhere; that they are continually distracted; that their wavering memory is unfaithful; that their character is seldom even; and above all that they have no true friends, because they are not true friends themselves. Celsus, a famous physician, asserts that young men who masturbate become pale and effeminate, drowsy, cowardly, languid and even imbecile.

Salmuth teaches us that two individuals given to onanism from a very early age had become idiots, and that the brain of one of them had dried up so much that it could be heard rattling inside the skull.

(Decur. II, an. 5, obs. 88. Vawswi, *Enten. de signis et morbis*, lib. 2) says that he has seen onanists who have been attacked by the dorsal consumption described by Hippocrates.[1] The physician Campe says that he saw a boy of nine blind in consequence of onanism, and Tissot cites many similar cases.

The physician Divag says that serious men of whatever belief, charged with the intellectual and moral energy of the young, have made it a duty to guard them against such errors of impurity. I remember hearing the physician Raspail in the year 1836 dissuading, with energetic conviction, the numerous students who attended his school from going to those obscene houses where one loses at once vitality and the energy of the understanding.

Example: A Candid Declaration of the Laments a Young Man Makes about Himself, Published by a Lover of Youth to Undeceive It

“At fourteen I learned the secret of masturbation properly so called, in a large school where this vice was known to all the pupils. From that fatal moment until the age of twenty-one, which I am now, I have not ceased to be the slave of this passion. Colour, freshness, the bloom of youth, liveliness, faculties, talent… all has vanished for me since that fatal moment!…

“At sixteen I felt pains towards the first false ribs, and also a great difficulty that still troubles me. A swelling and a continual torment in all parts of my body have been the consequences. What I could not then understand or explain I understand today, and I also know what these dull pains and these sufferings, as continual as they are indefinite, mean. The veil that hid my state from me has been drawn aside, and I see all the danger and its cause. Why must I have the misfortune of being able to blame no one but myself? By what fatality have I been so slow to avoid my ruin?… I spend these sad days in the greatest desolation, and they prepare others more painful still. I need only look in a mirror to recognize in it the destruction of all the advantages nature intended for me, and to fall again into the melancholy that consumes me. The thought of my future is what torments me most. In that with which I have sinned most I am most tormented, and I suffer very sharp and long pains in consequence of my excesses…”

Another Example Related by the Same Author

“The unhappy example supplied to me by a companion has placed me among the crowd of unfortunates for whom the consequences of masturbation make the memory of their early youth sad and bitter… Ah! Who

could have foreseen, when I was only fifteen or sixteen, the deep abyss into which a man throws himself who commits so horrible an outrage against the divine Author of nature!…

"I am now twenty-four. Many times, yes, many times I have committed this crime; and although I have more than once made the most solemn promises to abstain, I have only made that oath in order to break it… Alas!… My sight has diminished considerably… my colour does not answer to my age… As soon as I make any unusual movements I am bathed in sweat and my heart beats wildly… I have seen in the Berlin journal your account of a frightful accident whose only cause was my unhappy vice. I shuddered, and at once I conceived the plan of asking your opinion and seeking your help."

Maxim

The sin of impurity makes the sinner suffer a terrible hell.

Reflection

A single mortal sin deserves an eternal hell. And you, who have committed so many mortal sins of thought, word and deed, what hell will you deserve? And your sins are precisely unlawful pleasures, which are those that deserve the most torments and pains, as St. Augustine says. He proves it by those words of Sacred Scripture: "As much as one has glorified himself and lived in delights, so much torment and sorrow give to him." What pains and sorrows, then, will be given you there in hell, unhappy one, who have so delighted in your abominations and obscenities?… Think that not only your soul, but also that body of yours which you now idolize, will be tormented in the eternal fires of hell if you do not amend!… Think it over well… A brief enjoying, an eternal suffering! Pleasure passes like a flash of lightning; but eternity will never end!!!…

Resolution

I resolve to abstain from doing, saying and thinking anything immodest, for love of my Guardian Angel, especially during this day.

Physical Remedy

The physician Doussin says (p. 178) that the first step is to prescribe a suitable regimen and a way of life that will strengthen the body and keep the imagination from all its wanderings. But it should be borne in mind that he has said (p. 177) that the excessive use of meat and other nourishing foods, taken in greater abundance than the digestive powers allow, is very harmful to children. No brandy or liqueurs should be drunk; if wine is taken, it should be with two parts of water to one of wine.

Spiritual Remedy

To receive the holy sacraments of Penance and Communion frequently. The Most Holy Sacrament is called the bread of Angels;[1] so whoever wishes to live like an Angel in purity must live on their food. Nothing drives away the spirit of impurity so much as the Most Holy Sacrament well received.

The exercise shall be ended as on the first day, with the Prayer to Most Holy Mary and the Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin (pages 80 and 81 of the original, given above at the end of Sunday).

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[2] *tabes dorsalis*. *De morbis* II.

[1] Ps 77(78):25 and Wis 16:20; the *Panis angelicus*.

Friday, Sixth Day

Sixth Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin saw the side of her Son, already dead, pierced with a lance, and afterwards received him into her lap. In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Observations of Physicians and Philosophers

The famous Mr. Flouret declared in a dissertation that he did not fear to maintain the following. The pains that commonly appear along the spinal column in consequence of the terrible effects of masturbation are extremely atrocious. The individual becomes dry and emaciated. The functions of the stomach are upset and perverted, to the point that the secretion of urine is sometimes suppressed, and there follow a heavy pain in the head, weakness of sight through excessive dilation of the pupils, and complete loss of memory. Among all the illnesses that afflicted the patient, hypochondria was the most remarkable. And finally he exclaims that it would be impossible for him to make a complete list of the unheard-of multitude of evils that the organs of generation bring upon the economy \[*economía*, the body's system as a whole\]…

Mr. Tissot, the famous physician of Lausanne, says the same and perhaps more than the former, and supports his reasons with various cases he witnessed himself. He relates that of a handsome boy who had been warned several times of the danger to which he exposed himself by the vice of masturbation; but who, having turned a deaf ear to this advice, became so deformed before his death that the flesh covering the spinous processes of the loins disappeared.

The same author relates the case of another boy of fourteen or fifteen, who died of epileptic convulsions whose only origin was masturbation.

Lommius, book 2, says: "Pollutions… relax, dry up, weaken and enervate, and produce an infinity of ills, among which are counted apoplexy, lethargy, epilepsy, loss of sight, tremors, paralysis and every kind of rheumatic and gouty pain."

Example: A True Historical Account of the Misfortunes an Impure Youth Brought upon Himself, So that Other Young Men May Learn Their Lesson from Another's Head

"A young man who must now be twenty-eight had the misfortune to learn what masturbation was when he was barely sixteen, thanks to a young music teacher who gave him such fine lessons. It did not occur to him that it could be harmful; he only thought that such an act required great secrecy, and from then on he did not cease to repeat it, always avoiding witnesses. Having noticed in time that the act was always followed by a certain fatigue, he thought it would be very wise and good to practise it every night after going to bed, in order to fall asleep sooner; and for two years he used that soporific, which he held to be excellent. Thinking afterwards that he slept too much, he used the same means to wake up better, using it for another two years in the morning by way of an alarm clock. Four years passed while he continued that cursed vice, always ignorant of what he was doing. In this way he reached twenty, without anyone having caught him in the act or shown him the danger that threatened him and the ugliness of his action. But he was attacked by so violent a diarrhoea that it obliged him to keep to his bed fourteen days running. Two months later he suffered at night sweats so abundant that the pillows, the mattresses and the bedclothes were not merely damp but soaked with sweat; this lasted seven weeks. Three months later he was attacked by an extremely grave disease of the chest, accompanied by a burning fever and by raised spots on the skin, sometimes red and sometimes white. He was in this pitiful state when he had occasion to read Tissot's work entitled *Onanism*, and that of Guillerr, *Zedkundige Lessen* (*Instruction on Morals*). These two works together brought about his conversion, though too late. Although naturally cheerful, he is always restless and dejected. His tongue is

constantly covered with a thick matter that nothing removes, not even purges. He feels flushes and pains all over his cheeks. He also suffers pains in other parts of his body. His face is almost constantly covered with fistulas. He is never free of a cough, and his hands are usually as cold as ice, when on the contrary he feels them burning hot and they are seen covered with sweat."

Maxim

The sin of impurity makes a man be deprived of glory.

Reflection

Undeceive yourself once and for all: that heaven which you see so beautiful, and the most precious thing that is up there, is not for you unless you amend your impurities. St. Paul and St. John tell you clearly that those who do foul things will not enter the kingdom of heaven.[1] Do not doubt it, it is of faith: nothing defiled shall enter into glory.[2]

Those who enter into glory will be those who have lived well, and who in the resurrection will be like the Angels of God.[3] And you, who have lived not like an Angel of God but like… where will you end up!… For a brief pleasure you hand over and abandon an eternal contentment and joy without end! Think it over well: what do you gain from all those pleasures if in the end you are damned? What good will all those pleasures do you there in hell!… What satisfaction will they give you!… None, but more pain. The pleasure has passed, and the pain will never end!!!

Resolution

I resolve to abstain from doing, saying and thinking anything immodest, for love of the holy Patron whose name I bear, especially during this day.

Physical Remedy

Mr. Doussin says (p. 170) "that care should be taken that young people avoid idleness; intimate dealings with others suspected of having the same vice; want of cleanliness; going to bed before digestion is finished; and sleeping on their backs. They should, then, sleep on their right side, and not on a wool mattress, at most on one of horsehair, or a straw pallet; not much covered with bedclothes. The feet, however, should be warm, so as to draw the blood to them during sleep and keep it from going to the genital organs."

Spiritual Remedy

Not to be friends with the vicious, and to keep away from those who speak immodestly; to like being with one's parents, and to have a virtuous friend.

The exercise shall be ended as on the first day, with the Prayer to Most Holy Mary and the Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin (pages 80 and 81 of the original, given above at the end of Sunday).

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[1] Gal 5:19–21; 1 Cor 6:9–10; Eph 5:5; Rev 22:15.

[2] Rev 21:27, *Non intrabit in eam aliquod coinquinatum.* On purification and heaven.

[3] Mt 22:30.

Saturday, Seventh Day

Seventh Sorrow: when the Most Holy Virgin left her most loving Son in the sepulchre, and she was left in solitude. In memory of this sorrow you will greet Most Holy Mary with one Our Father and seven Hail

Marys, so that she may obtain for you a great sorrow for having sinned, and the gift of chastity.

Reading: Observations of Physicians and Philosophers

The famous J. L. Doussin says: “There is reason to believe that a youth gives himself to onanism when the loss of his memory coincides with the loss of the colour and freshness of his face; when from being cheerful he has suddenly become sad and melancholy; when it is observed that he has lost his liking for study; when, lastly, he has no appetite, has an irregular pulse, suffers night sweats that cannot be attributed to another illness, or eats more than usual while his emaciation nevertheless increases. This last effect, which appears very frequently, should not surprise us, if one accepts the opinion of those who hold, with reason, that the matter whose effusion takes place has its origin in the brain and the spinal marrow.”

Hippocrates, so justly called the Prince of medicine, reasons in this way: “Persons”, he says, “who frequently lose this substance, which must be considered as the essence of all, grow thin and waste away, although they take much nourishment.” “These same persons”, that great man adds, “feel a sensation as though ants were coming down from the head along the spine;… they deprive themselves of the faculty of reproduction, and their dreams always turn on objects capable of worsening their condition more and more; walks tire and weaken them, and cause heaviness of the head and ringing in the ears”; finally an acute fever ends their days.[1]

Modern physicians have made the same observation as Hippocrates. Hoffmann, among others, cites many cases in proof that young people who give themselves to this kind of libertinism do not thrive or put on flesh, although they eat a great deal.

Mr. Devay says “that those who masturbate cause themselves three kinds of very great harm:

1. “Physiological, or bodily, because they ruin their organism and undo the essential nervous and nutritive functions, so that they put an end to their life. 2. “They cause intellectual disorders, so that intelligence and memory are lost day by day, and many go mad. 3. “They cause moral disorders, because masturbators become sullen, capricious, rough and brutal.”

Example: A Candid and Frank Declaration Made by a Sick Man of the Harm the Vice of Impurity Has Done Him; the Famous Physician Doussin Publishes It as a Warning to Youth

“I have had the misfortune, like many other young men, of letting myself be dragged into a habit as pernicious for the body as for the soul. Age, helped by reason, corrected this wretched inclination some time ago; but the harm is already done. To the extraordinary affection and sensitivity of the nervous system, and to the accidents they cause, are added a weakness, a malaise, a distaste and an affliction that go with me ceaselessly. I am ruined by an involuntary seminal loss caused by my bad habit. My face looks like a corpse’s, so pale and leaden is it. The weakness of my body hampers all my movements, and that of my legs reaches such a point that I can hardly stand, and I never venture out of my room. My digestion is so bad that food comes up three or four hours after I have taken it as though it had just entered my stomach. My chest fills with phlegm, the frequency of which tires me, and the expectoration exhausts me.

“Here is a picture in miniature of my miseries, increased besides by the sad certainty I have acquired that in future they will always be more troublesome than at present. In a word, I very much doubt whether any human creature has ever suffered as many ills as torment me. Without a particular help from divine Providence I shall find it very hard to bear so heavy a burden much longer.”

Another Example, Related as an Eyewitness by Mr. Zimmermann, First Physician of His Majesty the King of England

"I saw a young man of twenty-three who became epileptic after weakening himself by frequent masturbation. Whenever he had nocturnal pollutions he fell into an epileptic fit; the same happened to him after his masturbations, from which he did not abstain in spite of the accidents and of the many reproaches made to him. When the fit was over he felt very severe pains in the kidneys and around the coccyx. However, as he finally stopped this practice for some time, I cured him of the pollutions, and I had hope of curing him of the epilepsy, whose fits had already disappeared. He recovered his strength, his appetite, his sleep and his natural colour, after having been like a corpse. But having gone back to his masturbations, which were always followed by an epileptic attack, it came to the point that he suffered these fits even in the streets; and one morning he was found dead in his room, fallen out of bed and bathed in blood."

Allow me here, adds Mr. Tissot, a question that occurred to me when I read this observation: are those who kill themselves with a pistol shot, throw themselves into a river or cut their throats more truly suicides than those who end their lives by masturbating?

Maxim

The sin of impurity keeps the Christian from being a true devotee of Most Holy Mary.

Reflection

To be a true devotee of Mary one must abstain from all sin and imitate her virtues; and you do the opposite. You do not abstain, but you sin, and you sin impurely, impurity being one of the things the Virgin and Mother of purity most abhors. Perhaps you think yourself devout, and call yourself so, because perhaps you say some prayer to her; but I tell you that if you do not change your ways she will not hold you for her devotee, but will abhor you and your sin, like the serpent she has beneath her feet. Think it over well… to be a true devotee of Mary is a sign of predestination, as not to be one is a sign of reprobation… Ah! To be abandoned by Mary through the sin of impurity!… Who will not abhor it?… I will not sin… I shall never sin… never, never impurities. Most Holy Virgin, help me…

Resolution

I resolve to abstain from doing, saying and thinking anything immodest, for love of the glorious St. Aloysius Gonzaga, protector of purity, especially during this day.

Physical Remedy

Mr. Doussin (p. 168) says: "It is very important that young people get up early, and that they not be allowed to go to bed before there is reason to believe they will fall asleep at once; for staying a long time in bed without sleeping heats them greatly." All these hygienic precepts are of little use by themselves; they must be accompanied by Religion, and in particular by prayer, and so one must ask God for continence and chastity.

Spiritual Remedy

Prayer and spiritual reading; and therefore to ask one's director which books are most suitable for him.

The exercise shall be ended as on the first day, with the Prayer to Most Holy Mary and the Deprecation to the Sorrowful Virgin (pages 80 and 81 of the original, given above at the end of Sunday).

END OF THE EFFECTIVE BALM.

[1] *tabes dorsalis*.