

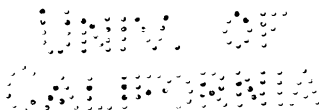
SEX ATTRACTION

A LECTURE GIVEN AT THE MICHIGAN STATE
NORMAL SCHOOL, JULY, 1919.

BY

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ST. LOUIS
C. V. MOSBY COMPANY
1920

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Press of
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PREFACE

This booklet consists of a lecture, first given to the teachers in the public schools in Michigan and later repeated at a summer session of the Michigan State Normal School. It is not a brochure on venereal diseases. It is an attempt to state in a broad way the physiologic relation between the sexes.

For some years past the author has given a course of three lectures to the women students in the University of Michigan. He believes that there are certain fundamental principles connected with the sex problem which all should understand. Consequently, he has attempted to treat this matter in a broad, scientific way, without going into details. The influence of sex touches our lives at every point in the reproductive period, and all intelligent people should understand and appreciate its nature and force.

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TO THE
ALABAMA

SEX ATTRACTION

In many of the lower forms of life there is no sex. The bacillus elongates, divides transversely, and two individuals come from one. Which is the parent and which is offspring? There is no such thing as parenthood and no such relationship as father, mother, son or daughter. The unicellular organism is potentially immortal, and given suitable conditions it might continue to multiply by fission indefinitely and eternally. As multicellular organisms develop, differentiation in structure and function begins. Certain cells are set apart to perform certain definite functions which are essential to the welfare of the whole. In the unicellular organism, all the functions of life are executed by the one cell. It feeds, absorbs, assimilates and eliminates. It maintains itself and pro-

creates for the future. Evidently such forms of life are capable of only a limited development. The higher multicellular organism is limited in its development only by the extent to which differentiation in structure and function can go. This determines the possible evolution of the species. As the scale of existence rises, differentiation becomes more complex and the limits beyond which evolution can not go are extended. In this way sex has been developed. Reproductive organs are developed, and the extent to which this is done determines the position of the species in the scale of existence. At one point in the evolution of life the male and female reproductive organs are found in the same individual. Evidently the evolution of a species provided with this form of reproduction is limited, consequently differentiation proceeds and results in the production of male and female. Cer-

tain individuals become responsible for only the male elements essential to procreation, while other individuals are assigned the task of supplying the female elements. Thus, it happens that in the higher plants and animals there are males and females; and the most perfect product of evolution, the genus homo, consists of man and woman. In this genus there is the most perfect development of the sex function. In no other species is the exercise of the sex functions so completely under the control of the individuals who possess it. In plant fertilization it is dependent wholly upon the season. Even in the higher animals sexual desire lies dormant the greater part of the time, and asserts itself only as a cyclic physiologic process. Furthermore, there are some good reasons for believing that this holds good to some extent among primitive peoples. It seems that the sexual ap-

petite has grown with the evolution of the race. It has been stated by certain travelers among primitive peoples that lapses from chastity among their women are less common than among us. I do not vouch for the truth of these statements, neither am I in a position to deny them. It certainly is true that in no other species is the reproductive act so under the control of those who participate in it as in the case of man. To some this may seem an unpleasant and even a terrifying statement, but I think when properly understood, it is a most cherishing and hopeful condition. It places the responsibility where it belongs. It makes the parent responsible for the child. In this lies the possibility of the unlimited improvement of the race. It clothes parenthood with a sacred obligation which no man or woman worthy to assume this function can ignore. It shows that the

creature, man, has been raised by the process of evolution until he has become a coworker with the Creator in the uplift of the race, and that the future of our kind is largely within man's power to make or to mar, to illumine or to darken, to fill with the joy of life or with the regret of having been born.

I wish to recall a statement I made concerning the unicellular organism that multiplies by fission. I stated this organism is potentially immortal. The same is true of man. The difference between the two is not so great as at first seems. Man consists of two kinds of cells, the somatic and the reproductive. The former constitute what we know as the man, but all his somatic cells are outgrowths from the reproductive cells and serve the individual through this short life. His brain, muscle, liver, stomach, bones, etc., are ephemeral. His immortal

part is the reproductive cell. This possesses the potentiality of eternal life, and it goes on from generation to generation. Life is continuous. The somatic cells constitute the temporary abiding place of the reproductive cells, and the latter are influenced by the former, more or less, in each generation. In this way the character of the parent is transmitted. Men are mortal, but man is immortal. The individual dies, but the race continues. Each individual is a part of the whole, and the perfection of the whole depends upon the soundness of the individual. We may have our different views concerning individual immortality; but as to the continuance of the race, there can be no discussion; and each generation has been, and will continue to be, what preceding generations have made it. Even those who do not directly participate in the continuance of the race have much to

do with shaping its destiny by the influence they have on those of the direct line. There is therefore no one to whom this is not a matter of vital concern.

I have spoken of the differentiation which has led to the development of the sexes in man. It may be well to inquire as to how far this has gone in our species. How different are men and women? To what extent has the development of sex affected the whole structure? We need not be surprised if we learn that the evolution of so important a function as this has led to differences more or less marked in every part of the body, and that these differences have touched the finest and most delicate mechanism of life, even the intellectual and moral being. On this point we can not speak at present with absolute certainty. This is a problem with which science is at present busy, but we can say that it is

probable that delicate, but appreciable and even measurable, differences between the male and female exist in every cell of our bodies. This is a matter which is giving the educator, the psychologist, and the physician much concern, and one upon which no one is yet prepared to speak with absolute certainty. While this is true, there are certain things which seem to be quite definitely demonstrated and upon which I propose to touch. While the sex function has been developed primarily for the purpose of procreation, it has come to be a mighty factor in the development of the character and well-being of the individual. No man can escape the fact that he is male, and no woman that she is female. This recognition of structural and functional differences does not imply inferiority in either. The sexual glands elaborate an internal secretion which permeates every tissue,

modifies every function, and colors our most secret being. Children are practically neuter, but with the development of the reproductive glands, the rate and manner of growth change according to the sex. Remove these glands before puberty and the neuter state or infantilism persists. Any man or woman may go through life with the average health, doing good work, either physical or mental, bearing himself honorably and treating others justly and kindly without once indulging in the procreative act. Absolute continence is compatible with health, efficiency, and happiness, but disease of the sexual glands is incompatible with any and all of these. No young woman is under any compunction to accept the rake. The spinster state is perfectly respectable and is compatible with a long, happy, and useful life; while she who weds the young man who has been sowing his

wild oats is likely to go to the operating table within a short time, and to spend the rest of her life in regret. I have touched upon this point in order to make it plain that sexual health is essential to the well-being of the individual, as well as to the betterment of the race.

The differentiation which has been necessary in the development of the sexes in the genus homo has made one the complement of the other. From this, sex attraction results. By sex attraction I mean the pleasure and the mutual satisfaction that come to two persons of opposite sexes when brought into association. It may be quite apart from the function of reproduction. Under normal conditions the mother has a warmer spot in her heart for her sons than for her daughters, while with the father this is reversed. In the children affection follows like lines. The normal big

brother, would lay down his life for his sister, be she older or younger than he, while he would be unwilling to make so great a sacrifice for his brother. Under normal conditions there is much more pleasure experienced in rendering a service to one of the opposite, than to one of the same, sex. Likewise, there is greater appreciation of a service rendered when the doer is of the opposite sex. Words of approbation fall upon more eager ears when they come from the lips of the opposite sex. This theme might be amplified indefinitely, but I do not think that any one will question the all-pervading influence of sex—for good or ill. It follows us through the daily routine and becomes an important factor in every decision. It quickens our ambitions, modifies and often determines our conduct, and weaves the delicate structure of our dreams. It is a potent agent in either direction.

It may fill the cup of life with a nectar fit for the gods, or it may drop into the sweet drink a poison which destroys body, mind, and soul. It may lift to the highest heaven or it may cast into the deepest hell.

We who are engaged in the education of the young should always bear in mind both the good and the ill that may come to those under our care from sex attraction. We should not ignore its existence, because it is a biologic function. It develops in the youth of both sexes at the period of adolescence with some degree of suddenness, and they as a rule are quite unconscious of its significance and wholly ignorant of its potency, and especially of the harm it may do them. Its influence is widely different in individuals. In those of good ancestry and under favorable environment the effects are favorable, and the girl and boy flower into womanhood and man-

hood; but in those of defective parentage or living under untoward conditions, the results may be most disastrous. The steps of many a girl are turned into downward paths at this period of development. Especially is this true of those who are weak mentally. Prostitution is largely recruited from those of this class, and thoughtful educators are recognizing the fact that many of our schools are not free from these dangers. Being a male, I am inclined to make a special plea for the girls. My deepest sympathy is with them in a most trying period of their development, at a time when they most need wise counsel and help. The girl blooming into womanhood feels this natural and persuasive desire to attract those of the opposite sex, and in her ignorance she falls at least a half willing victim to the lust of some villainous male. She dresses and deports herself under the influ-

ence of this potent and subconscious force, and in doing so she risks her all, quite unconscious of the existence of the pit into which she is to fall. It might be said that parents are to blame for this condition. Mothers should caution and protect their daughters. So they should, but many mothers are ignorant, and from a sense of prudery, it is not considered a proper thing for even a mother to speak to her daughter about matters pertaining to sex. Moreover, however wise the precepts of the home, there is the example set at school. Other girls do this and mother belongs to a past generation. She is not supposed to know how girls of the present day should deport themselves. That the behavior of the girls in many of our high schools invites disaster can not be denied. Unpleasant facts have bared themselves to the eyes of teachers and the public, and a task lies be-

fore us which we can not shirk. A friend of mine, an observant and intelligent physician in one of the larger cities of the Middle West, told me some years ago that the street in front of one of the high schools of his city was converted into a peacock alley every noon hour when the weather permitted. The young lady students dressed to attract men and departed themselves with the plain intention of inviting address from the rakes who came to see the parade. A shocking condition of sexual degeneracy came to light in the high school of a smaller city in the Northwest about the same time, and there is undeniable evidence that this is not the only place where such things have occurred. The school is not the only place where the impulse to attract the opposite sex leads the girl astray; but we are teachers, and are especially interested in the school problem. Before proceeding I wish

to state that I am not a pessimist, and I do not wish to appear as an alarmist. I believe that the world is better on the whole than it has ever been, and I am aware of the fact that in all ages girls by the thousands have gone astray, but we want the world to hasten its pace toward perfection, and because an evil condition is as old as the world is no reason that it should continue, but all the more reason why we, recognizing it as evil, should cast it out.

What may be done to save the school girl from the dangers of sex attraction? It is well to recognize at the outset that the problem is a complex one, and there is no ready-made and safe way of solving it. Those who undertake to handle it must be tactful and resourceful. Stern commands and prohibitions are likely to fall on deaf ears or to awaken an antagonism which surely means defeat. The ex-

perience of the past has shown that even locks, bars, and prison walls are not effective means in attempts to save the silly girl who wishes to throw herself into the arms of some rake. Should the parent be consulted and warned? The answer to this must be determined by the individual case. It is sad, but true, that some mothers encourage their daughters in their attempts to attract the opposite sex. They are proud to have their daughters admired and are not inquisitive concerning the character of the admirer. I think that much may be done, especially by female teachers, in discouraging flashy dressing. Plain, neat, clean, inexpensive dress best becomes the school girl. Both in dress and in deportment the female teacher should be a model to the girls under her charge. I believe that instruction, by the proper person, in the fundamental biologic facts of sex should be

given to the girls in all our high schools. I doubt seriously the wisdom of attempting this in the lower grades. When girls reach the age of puberty they should know themselves and the dangers to which they are quite sure to be exposed. They should know the fundamental facts of anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, and the application of these to themselves. They should be instructed how to keep themselves healthy and free from contamination. They should be told that the men whom they are likely to attract by artificial means are exactly the ones whom they should avoid. Ignorance on these points has been tried for centuries, and it has been demonstrated that the results have been disastrous. Let us try knowledge. The truth, properly stated, can hurt no one. Talks upon these subjects can be given to girls by either male or female teachers without embarrassment

to either speaker or audience, and with profit to the latter. This statement is not made on theoretical grounds, but it has been tested in our normal schools and universities. There are in this audience teachers who have demonstrated this. I think it best that the lectures dealing with this subject of sex should be a part of a course in general hygiene. In my lectures to the girls at the university I have followed the following general plan: The general anatomy of the female pelvis; the location of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, and vagina, and the function of each. I have dwelt upon the internal secretion of the ovaries and its great influence upon the health, development, and well-being of the individual. I have attempted to show that healthy secretions can come only from healthy organs. Then I have gone without hesitancy into the diseases which damage

these organs. This has been done by others, and by some much better than I have done it. I have never known of a girl bearing herself less modestly on account of this knowledge, and many have testified to its value to them. If such instruction can be given to the girls in our normal schools and universities, why should it not be given to their sisters in the high school? Indeed, this has been done, and is now being done, in more than one high school in this state. The great majority of girls have no education beyond the high school. Some say that the trouble begins in the lower grades, and if this instruction does not reach these, it fails in its purpose. I am painfully aware of the fact that there is much sexual nastiness among both girls and boys in our ward schools. Every physician knows this, but to my mind, this is quite apart from the question of teaching sex hygiene. It

is another problem, and it is to be solved by stricter attention to the children especially in the retiring rooms. Parents also can do much in improving this most undesirable condition.

I do not suppose that instruction in sex hygiene is going to save all the girls. There are thousands of children, even in this country, growing up under conditions, outside of their school life, which render it impossible for them to develop into good citizens. This is quite as impossible as it is for tropical fruits to grow in arctic regions. A few years ago, in Ann Arbor, within a stone's throw of one of the university buildings there lived a woman and her two daughters, the elder no more than sixteen, and all three were prostitutes. That like conditions exist elsewhere there can be no reason to doubt. This family was detected by our efficient probation officer, who, unlike most of those fill-

ing this office, is not blind. We boast of our civilization, but there are still many among us who would be stoned to death should they attempt to live in a tribe of savages.

There are sexual perverts among girls as well as boys. The majority of these come from bad stock, are weak intellectually, belong to the alarmingly large class of morons, and constitute a menace to the betterment of the race. When bad environment is added to bad heredity, girls of this class are well-nigh incorrigible. Many of them have pretty, doll-like faces, and are highly attractive to the foolish and over-susceptible of the opposite sex. Instruction will be largely wasted on these, because they are devoid of the mentality necessary to receive it. Unfortunately there are some of these in most of our large schools, and they present a most difficult problem. I believe that in the

medical inspection of schools, which has already demonstrated its great usefulness, mental as well as physical tests should be applied to all, and the defective should be assigned to special schools, supplied with experts in dealing with delinquents. This task should be assigned to most tactful and experienced men and women, because it is liable to meet with a storm of protest which in many instances is sure to render its execution impossible.

In the teaching of sex hygiene the boy needs to be handled quite differently from the girl. In sex approach under natural conditions the male is the aggressor. This is physiologic, and it should be understood by both sexes. [It has been said with bitterness by women that man is ready to defend a woman's virtue against every other man but himself.] There is truth in this saying, and it has a

physiologic basis which is often woefully abused by the man. It is man's nature to demand, and it is woman's natural inclination, under certain conditions, to yield. In the sex relationship, under normal conditions, the male is masterful and the woman despises the man who is not. Failure to understand and appreciate this fact will rob the teaching of sex hygiene of half its influence on boys. Boys should be plainly told all about the effects of gonorrhoea and syphilis, but don't try to frighten them with the great injury that may come to them personally from these diseases. To the average normal boy the element of personal danger is an incentive to find out for himself. Appeal to his chivalry. Tell him that if he acquires syphilis he becomes a walking culture of most virulent organisms, that mucous patches will develop on his tongue and cheeks, and that his mother or sister can not

kiss him without danger of infection, that he poisons every cup from which he drinks and that he becomes a source of danger to those who are dearest to him; that he can never love a pure girl without polluting her with a most loathsome disease, and that he is unfit for parenthood and ceases to be a man in any proper sense. Then go on and awaken his chivalry for the girl whom he may seduce by surprise; tell how the girl trusts and how unmanly it is to betray a trust. I am in the habit of saying to the boys in my classes: "I have lectured to you on heredity. I have shown that you and I are what our ancestors have made us: while I have been giving these talks each of you has been wondering what kind of ancestors he has. Change your point of view; project yourself some years into the future. Then some boy will be wondering what kind of ancestors he had. He will be thinking of you,

and it may be that thirty or fifty years from now some young man will be carried to the insane asylum a hopeless and helpless parietic because you, his father or grandfather, got drunk and acquired syphilis." Boys who do not see the force and justness of this argument are by nature bad.

There are boys who seem beyond the reach of any argument. A young man entered this university last fall, and as he afterwards admitted, went fresh from the lectures on venereal diseases to a house of prostitution in Detroit and acquired syphilis. He spent a part of the second semester in University Hospital where he served as an object lesson in the clinics. The idea that prostitution should be permitted in any city or anywhere is a relic of the past of which we should free ourselves. The existence of houses of prostitution renders it all too easy for young men to do them-

selves irreparable harm. An efficient and honest police force can free any city from every form of this vice. That there is an awakened conscience in this matter is shown by the enactment and enforcement of the Mann law, by the attention now being given to the low wages of girls and by the efforts being made in our cities to suppress this form of vice. What would we think of a city which would permit centers of smallpox infection to exist within their limits? Smallpox is mild in its effects upon the individual and negligible in its disastrous and far-reaching effect upon the community compared with the great pox, syphilis. The former may scar the faces of many and kill a few, while the latter fills insane asylums with its wretched victims, scatters its virus among the innocent, and blights future generations with its withering curses. I have spoken of the parade

of silly school girls on the streets of a western city, but let me tell you of a condition which recently existed in one of our large eastern cities. This story was told me by a physician resident of that place. There is a school for boys of from fourteen to sixteen years. This physician thought of placing his son in this school, and preparatory to doing so he made an investigation of the conditions surrounding it. He found that prostitutes gathered about this school as the hour of closing approached, for the purpose of captivating the boys. Think of the painted harlot who waits at the gate of the school to personally conduct the innocent boys through the gates of hell. Think of this condition and ask yourself how far are we yet from true civilization. There is, so far as I know, but one country in the world which makes legal provision for the punishment of the female seducer, and

that is the country which we are taught to regard as the most licentious—France. Every large city and many smaller ones permit vampires to lure unwary youths into gilded dens of infamy. Some one should organize a society for the protection of our sons.

We should deal with the venereal diseases as we do with other infectious diseases. Those who contract them should be reported, as we do with smallpox, and then segregated, not in houses of prostitution, but in hospitals. I believe in the segregation of prostitutes both male and female, but not in places where the disease may be disseminated, but where this is impossible. Please do not misunderstand me on this point. I would not deal harshly with any unfortunate. It is not within the province of the medical man to do so. I would not damn any one for making a mistake, especially a mistake dependent upon

a frailty so common to man as this. To contract a venereal disease is not a crime; it is a misfortune, a sad misfortune, and one which unfortunately is not always remediable. To infect another with a venereal disease is a crime, a moral if not a legal one. In this state it is a statutory crime, and one open to serious punishment. We have been harsh and unreasonable in our judgments at least with unfortunates of this class. We have said no one contracts these diseases without committing a deadly sin and he deserves whatever punishment his transgression may bring. We forget the thousands of innocent wives who become infected. We forget the tens of thousands of crippled children who come into the world under a fearful handicap. We refuse to instruct our children as to the dangers that lie in wait for them. The campaign against the venereal diseases must be a hu-

mane and just one. We must not set ourselves as "holier than thou," and treat the erring daughter or the wayward son as outcasts. Had I a daughter and she wanted to marry a man whom I knew to be syphilitic, I would investigate the young man. If he were a confirmed roue, I would, of course, never consent. Had he made a mistake through ignorance and was otherwise worthy, I would say, when you are thoroughly cured, I shall give my consent. Some of my professional colleagues have denounced my views on this point as immoral, but I have practiced medicine long enough to know that in the majority of instances, not in all, the venereal diseases are curable and constitute no permanent bar to parenthood. Besides, this is the common experience of all who have had to deal with these diseases. The treatment is long and the mental torture is great, greater than any one

save the physician and the victim can imagine. Provided that a complete and unquestionable cure can be secured, and science can now accurately determine this, the question of permitting marriage then becomes strictly a moral one, and I could never find it within my heart to lastingly condemn any one for a mistake. I do not believe in unpardonable sins.

It is said by some that the teaching of sex hygiene can have no effect upon the young, because love is never reasonable and consists wholly of sentiment and feeling. What is true in this statement is largely due to the cloak of ignorance with which we have clothed the sex instinct. Did the young woman know the fearful pollution which the rake brings with him and seeks to transmit to her, she would see all of this and would from the moment of introduction loathe him, notwithstanding his handsome

face, manly form, and deferential bearing. Remove the double standard of virtue as applied to men and women and the young woman would look upon the young man who has been sowing his wild oats as she now regards those of her own sex whom he has debauched. Our sons and daughters are what their ancestors, including ourselves, have made them, modified more or less by their environment, for which we are responsible. They see through our eyes or those which we have given them, and if we place riches and social position above clean living, they are likely to do the same. Besides, our children are what we are, not what we pretend to be. Clothing the ass in the lion's skin does not affect the progeny of the former. The devil may wear the livery of heaven, but his sons are devils still. The libertine may hide his vices, but he must not swear at fate when his children

are not equally successful in concealing them.

Possibly I am placing too much emphasis on heredity and too little on environment. I am ready to plead guilty to the latter. Environment is a most potent factor in the sex question. Proper association of the sexes is probably the strongest force in the uplift of the race. I desire that my sons should be much in the company of women. Who can measure the power for good that woman has over man? This is quite apart from the reproductive function. The admiration of a good man can hurt no woman, neither is this any reason why the admiration of a good man should be limited to one woman, or vice versa. Good comradeship between the sexes is beneficial to both. I feel quite sure that coeducation, with its disadvantages which are plainly evident, is better than the exclusive form, but

this is too big a theme to go into now.

Among certain classes sex association is so intimate that ill naturally, and we might say, necessarily, results. This is a matter of sanitary housing, which has not received the degree of attention it deserves.

Sex attraction, like all other biologic functions, has its abnormal phases and manifestations. All these are interesting, and some are serious in their consequences. In some people it seems wholly wanting. This is of no racial importance, and affects the life of the individual only, or at most concerns only a few intimate associates. A much more serious abnormality is sex antagonism. This is a diseased state, and until recently it has been observed only in sporadic form. There is occasionally a woman-hating man, or a man-hating woman. Recently this disease has become a most alarming epidemic in England, greatly

to the inconvenience of the normal of both sexes. It is to be hoped that this disease may not become pandemic. It certainly should be kept out of this country, even if it be necessary to resort to strict quarantine.

There is another perversion of the function of sex attraction and this is known as sex-infatuation or intoxication. It is an acute, self-limited disease, which runs a short but violent course. The disease is characterized by illusions and hallucinations in which the victim talks about his affinity or soul mate, and other jargon unintelligible to those in the normal state.

Sex-infatuation is a mirage to which the parties hasten madly, to find themselves overwhelmed by a dust storm.

Sex attraction is the fountain of perpetual youth, long sought by the individual, long possessed by the race.

The drinking of its waters endows the race with life eternal, renews each succeeding generation, and will ultimately develop the better man.

I wish to emphasize the fact that while the central purpose in the development of sex attraction is reproduction, this is by no means all. Before there is reproduction there should be something worthy of being produced. The silly moron girl who will entwine her affections about the first man who will permit it is not the type which should be reproduced, neither is the vicious, immoral boy. Our efforts should be directed to the extinction of both of these. He who wastes his substance in riotous use of the reproductive function, whether it be outside or inside of the legal enactments, procreates a kind which does not bless, but curses the race. Said a childless man to me a few days

ago: "John Doe's manly sons fill me with regret that I am not a father, while Richard Roe's worthless progeny banish all this regret."

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