

more severely shocked by such a circumstance. Such people of course would be taken care of by their friends and kept at home instead of being placed at public institutions. It might prove an interesting investigation to inquire how many invalids were injured in health by the shock caused by the shooting. Physicians might be able to give some interesting facts. We seriously believe that we lost one patient through that cause. He had but recently become our patient, was in an exceedingly low state of vitality, but we had every expectation of improving his strength and restoring him to health. Our treatment started out with good indications when the shocking news was flashed over the wires that the President had been shot. Our patient being a great admirer of the President, he was deeply affected by the news,—so much that he speedily declined and died in a few days.

### Dr. Foote's Reply to the Alphites.

We give place this month to a letter from Dr. Caroline B. Winslow, of Washington, a good, enthusiastic, and honest worker in sexual reform. In our September issue we published an excellent letter from Mrs. C. B. Whitehead, taking pretty much the same position as that presented by Dr. Winslow. We have indeed several contributors who exhibit a decided leaning to the Alphite doctrine. And why do we call it the Alphite doctrine? Because Mrs. Dr. Winslow publishes a paper in Washington called the *Alpha*, in which this doctrine is strongly presented. And what is the Alphite doctrine? It is that there should be no sexual commerce excepting for the purpose of reproduction, a sort of Shaker notion which does not threaten us with utter extinction.

We, on the other hand, fully believe in animal magnetism, that every living organization generates this force; that there is a sort of individuality in this magnetism; that the interchange of the magnetic forces between persons who are congenial is physically improving and mentally inspiring; that congenial persons of the same sex may benefit each other by social contact, by hand-shaking and agreeable conversation; that the effects of magnetic interchange are more markedly exhibited between two congenial persons of the opposite sex; that this interchange may advantageously take place in ordinary social intercourse, but that the most perfect interchange is induced by that relation so strongly demanded by the natural instincts; that the organs or conductors which nature has provided for this interchange are the most perfect of any for the performance of this function; that when the human family shall come to perfectly understand the wonderful mechanism of these organs and their true uses they will be regarded in a different light from what they now are; that in the infancy of the human family they have been subjected to grave perversions resulting in all kinds of diseases, and seriously interfering with the production of well-balanced and viable offspring. We cannot stop in this argument to give the reasons for believing as we do, nor is it necessary that we should, for in our "Plain Home Talk" embracing "Medical Common Sense," we think we have presented good and sufficient grounds for our belief. If not, we could easily write another volume with any number of new facts which have come under our observation, sustaining our views and which would puzzle any one to account for if we are incorrect in our way of explaining them.

In the present attitude of the human mind, warped by sexual perversion, prejudiced by a conventional morality which would if possible turn the very tide of nature, it is difficult to discuss this subject as freely and understandingly as its merits deserve. Even the Alphites taking their extreme moral, ascetic ground, are liable to incur the prosecutions of the vice societies, while those taking our positions practically stand at the very prison door when presenting what are considered vital truths upon this subject.

With so much by way of introduction we will proceed directly to answer the questions which Mrs. Dr. Winslow has asked. To the first question we emphatically answer YES; hundreds of such cases. Still stranger, many of these cases have been among men!—Does not our observing interrogator know that it is a physical law that organs lose their powers by inaction?—Does she not know that the muscles become atrophied and weakened by nonuse? Is she not aware that all our senses are only preserved by temperate exercise and that they may be destroyed as well by neglect and no exercise as by abuse and over-activity? Does not our intelligent interrogator also know from her observations in medical practice that when the sexual organs are broken down or weakened by continence as well as by abuse, that the mind becomes affected—that the memory is impaired, that the power of mental concentration is lost, that the vigor of the whole nervous organization is in fact impaired? We always find it so in our practice. We might instance many cases illustrative of the truth of our answer to the first question. It is very difficult, however, to enter into such details in a newspaper article, because it would render it too lengthy, and still more because such details would be deemed exceedingly inappropriate in a periodical issued for general circulation. We will speak of one: We were once called upon by a young minister about thirty-five years of age; a handsome man in his physical proportions and an intellectual looking man in his commanding physiognomy. From protracted continence he had utterly broken down in his sexual system: was impotent. With this impotency came inability to fix his mind upon any subject. He was feeling it incumbent upon him to leave the ministry in consequence of his condition; he called himself a mental wreck. We would like in this connection to quote all that he said in support of his own view of the case that his usefulness had been sacrificed to what he considered to be a sense of duty. No amount of argument could have convinced him that he would have thus broken down had he lived a natural life sexually. Circumstances had prevented marriage, and strong moral convictions forbade any illicit methods of relief. We may add in this connection that we are not infrequently consulted by conscientious widowers who have in from one to ten years of widowhood lost all the natural powers and with them mental balance while all other physical parts seemed to be in perfect health and development. Some of them have indeed been fine specimens of the race with a physique strikingly perfect when measured by our present standards.

In answer to the second question we would say that we meet with many such cases, undoubtedly more than of those arising from continence. We are willing to go further and to concede that in consequence of the ignorance of the human family in relation to the sexual organs and of the injuries which have accrued to these organs