

of virginity? Each of these questions has been asked, and to each a different answer has been given.

This contrariety of opinion, as to a fact which depends upon a simple inspection, is a proof of the eagerness of mankind to discover in Nature things which alone exist in their own imaginations. Several anatomists frankly declare they never found either the hymen or *carunculæ*, even before the age of puberty, while others, in maintaining that this membrane, and these *carunculæ* do exist, confess, that they are substances which vary in form, size, and consistency, in different subjects; that sometimes in the place of the hymen there is only a single *caruncula*; that at other times there are two or more united by a membrane, and that the shape of the aperture is of different forms. From all these observations what conclusions are to be drawn, but that the causes of the pretended contraction in the passage of the vagina are not certain, and that when they do exist their effect is transient and susceptible of different modifications? Anatomy leaves no entire certainty as to the existence of this membrane of the hymen and these *carunculæ*, of course it authorizes us to reject such tokens