

tokens of virginity, not only as uncertain but as imaginary. The effusion of blood, though a more common sign, is not less equivocal. In every age this has been deemed a certain proof of virginity ; and yet all such proof is nothing, where the entrance of the vagina is naturally relaxed or dilated. Neither is it confined to virgins, as many women who pretend not to that denomination, frequently experience an effusion of blood. From some it flows copiously, and repeatedly ; from others in a very small quantity, and only once ; and from some it never flows at all. This diversity depends on the age, the health, the conformation of the parts, and a number of other circumstances. A few of these we shall enumerate, and at the same time endeavour to investigate the causes of those physical tokens which have been laid down as certain proofs of virginity.

At the age of puberty, the parts of both sexes undergo a considerable change. Those of man advance so quickly, that in two or three years they attain their full growth, those of women also increase at this period, especially the *nymphæ*, which though before almost imperceptible, become now large and evident. The menstrual discharge happens at the same time ;