

and all the parts being still in a state of growth, swell by an increase of blood, and mutually compress each other. The orifice of the vagina contracts, though the vagina itself has considerably increased. The form of this contraction must be very different in different subjects, for from the information of anatomists, it appears, there are sometimes four, at others only three or two *carunculæ*, and that sometimes there is found a circular, or semi-lunar series of folds and wrinkles. But one thing anatomists have never told us ; namely, that whatever form this contraction may assume, it never appears before the age of puberty.

In the young girls whom I have had occasion to see dissected, nothing of that kind was to be found ; and having collected several facts on this subject, I can with confidence maintain, that when a girl has conversed with a man before puberty, there is no effusion of blood, provided the disproportion of the parts had not been too great, or the efforts had not been too violent. At full puberty, on the other hand, that effusion often happens, even from trifling causes ; especially if she is of a full habit, and regular. This sign of virginity is rarely observed in such as are meagre, or subject to the *fluor albus* ;