

The curse removed : a statement of facts respecting the efficacy of water-cure in the treatment of uterine diseases, and the removal of the pains and perils of pregnancy and childbirth / by T.L. Nichols.

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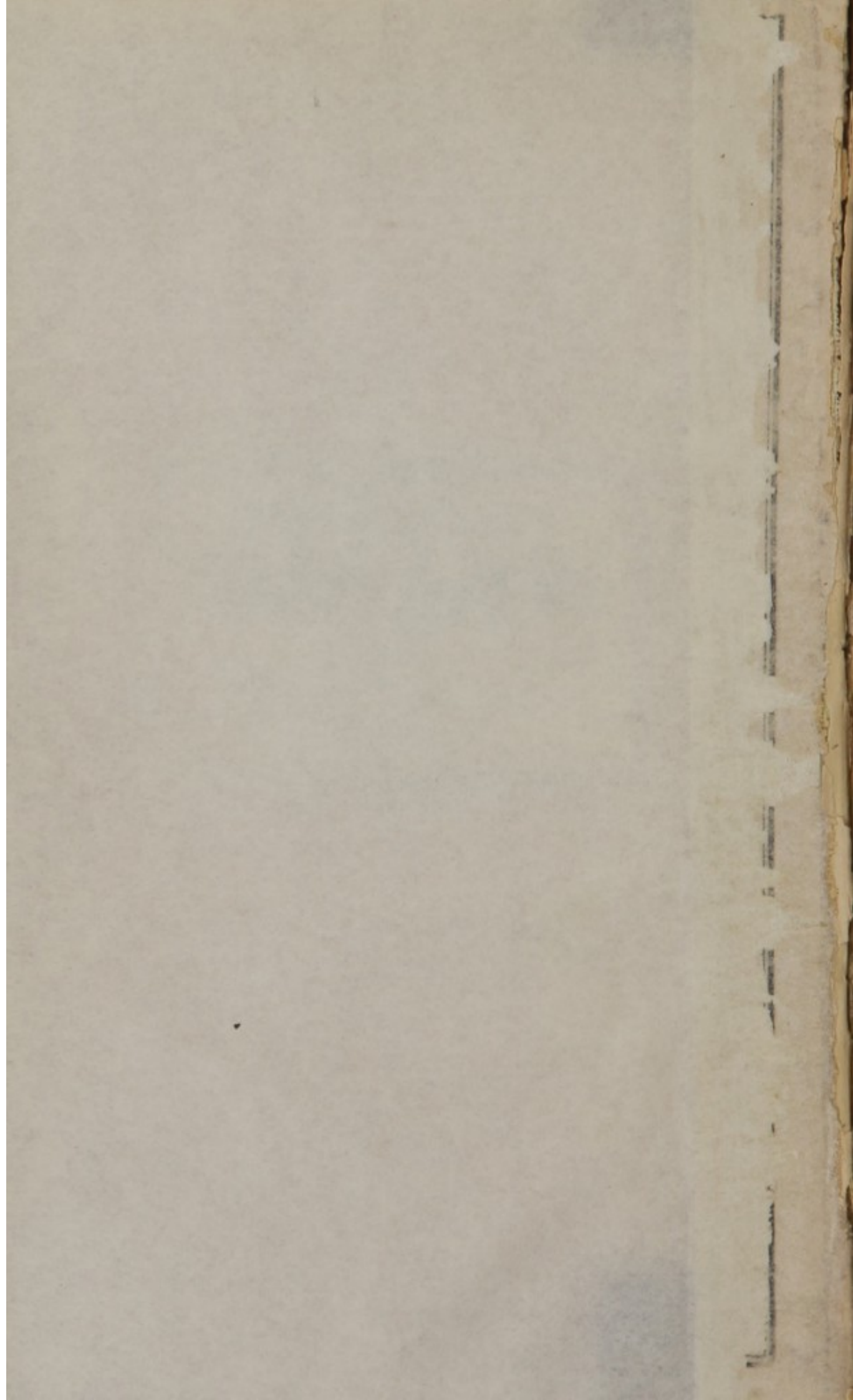


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THE CURSE REMOVED:

A

STATEMENT OF FACTS

RESPECTING THE

EFFICACY OF WATER-CURE

IN THE

TREATMENT OF UTERINE DISEASES,

AND THE

REMOVAL OF THE PAINS AND PERILS

OF

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH.

✓
BY T. L. NICHOLS, M. D.

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Washington, D.C.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF THE WATER-CURE JOURNAL.

FOR GRATUITOUS CIRCULATION.

THE CURSE REMOVED:

STATEMENT OF FACTS

EFFECTS OF WATER-CURE

TREATMENT OF VENEREAL DISEASES

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BY T. L. RICHOLS, M.D.

NEW YORK:

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

THIS TRACT needs no apology. I feel assured that every man and every woman, into whose hands it may fall, will thank me for having written it, and for giving them the opportunity to read it, by the manner of its circulation. Of that, I wish to give a word of explanation.

The matter of the following pages was first published as the leading article in the WATER-CURE JOURNAL for November, 1850. That work, on account of its own merits, and the growing popularity of the Water-Cure, has a monthly circulation of nearly twenty thousand copies—doubtless much the largest of any medical periodical in the world.

But that circulation is scattered over the whole country, so that there must be thousands in this city who have never seen it, perhaps scarcely heard of it, or the great medical reform it so ably advocates. It is for this reason that I publish this article in its separate form; and I mean to give it the widest circulation consistent with my means, that the truths it contains may reach the greatest number, and do the greatest good.

IT IS PRINTED FOR GRATUITOUS DISTRIBUTION. I do this, because the information contained in these pages is invaluable. It is a Gospel of Health to woman, and to

her offspring. No price can be put upon it. Those who value it will extend the knowledge to others. If any wish to aid me in this work, they shall be furnished with copies for distribution, at the cost of printing.

The public is becoming thoroughly awakened to the necessity of a Health Reform. A remedy for the errors, abuses, and outrages of medical practice must be a part of that reform; and that remedy is presented by the Water-Cure—the greatest blessing a pure science has bestowed upon humanity. That the whole world may enjoy this blessing, is the object of my unceasing efforts, and my constant prayers.

THOMAS L. NICHOLS, M.D.

New York, 87 West Twenty-second Street,
November 20, 1850.

THE CURSE REMOVED.

IN my "Introduction to the Water-Cure," I have spoken briefly of the adaptations of the hydropathic treatment to the diseases of women, and the conditions of gestation and parturition. As my experience has increased, and the sphere of my observation has extended; as I have been brought into contact with human suffering, and have been able to guard against or relieve it; as the perils and agonies of childbirth, under the usual modes of treatment, have been contrasted with the safe, and speedy, and almost painless labors of those who have had the benefit of the water treatment, I have felt it my duty to address a few earnest, and, I hope, impressive words to the wives and mothers, the husbands and fathers, who may feel an interest in a subject, the importance of which human life can scarcely parallel.

It is no egotism in me to say, that I have studied this subject with very peculiar advantages, and such as no physician in this country has probably ever enjoyed. I allude, of course, to the aid, counsel, and assistance of my wife, whose intimate acquaintance with this branch of medical science, and whose extensive and most successful practice, are widely known and appreciated. This acknowledgment of my obligations to her science, experience, and skill is due alike to her, to the reader, and to myself; and I am proud to say, that she has taught me far more, in connection with this subject, than I could ever have learned in all our medical libraries and colleges; and to her is justly due the credit of some of the most important reforms connected with the hydropathic treatment.

There is a common impression that gestation is, of necessity, a period of disease and suffering, and that parturition is inevitably a painful and dangerous process. This belief, it must be admitted, seems to be lamentably justified by experience. Amid the depravities of civilization, there are comparatively few women who escape

nausea, vomitings, and other symptoms of a deranged nervous system, during the period of pregnancy; few who do not suffer long agonies in childbirth. A painful labor of six to ten hours, with two or three weeks' close confinement after it, is called "a good time;" and labors of twenty-four and forty-eight hours are by no means unfrequent. And though death, as the immediate result of parturition, is comparatively rare, it is still frequent enough to be recognized as no improbable event. On an average, three women die every week in this city from what are termed the accidents of childbirth; while one thousand three hundred and twenty children last year were stillborn, or born prematurely, so that their lives were sacrificed.

I need not dwell upon the state of disease and the amount of suffering which these facts indicate. The peculiar diseases of women, the pains and perils of gestation and childbirth are familiar to us all. They have come to be considered as among the necessary evils of life, to be borne patiently, and with humble submission to the will of God, who has laid this terrible curse upon woman in consequence of the sin of Eve, in seducing Adam to partake of the forbidden fruit. And this superstition rises to oppose all reform, and every effort to ameliorate the condition of woman, to heal her diseases, protect her from danger, and save her from her terrible, and all the more terrible, because needless, sufferings.

The sentence, or curse, or prediction, on which this superstition is based is contained in the third chapter of Genesis:

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life," etc.

Now the curse of the ground has not hindered inventions in agriculture, until portions of the earth have been converted into new Edens; and if Adam ate his food in sorrow, with the loss of Paradise an ever present and embittering memory, this has not hindered millions of his posterity from eating their food with gladness and festivity. So of Eve; every conception may have been to her a new sorrow, when she thought of the heritage her offspring had lost. She may have sorrowed to bring children into a world cursed by her disobedience; but to her posterity conception has often been

a joy, and the birth of a child, though painful, an event of exceeding happiness. It is very plain that the text in no way justifies the common notion concerning it; for were it a law that childbirth should be accompanied by pain, it is a law daily and continually violated, and one which I intend to shew can be so far set aside, that pain in childbirth, instead of being the rule, shall be the rare exception.

This immunity from suffering is not a thing unknown. Throughout the world, now and in all times, just in proportion as women have lived according to the requirements of nature, they have been exempted from this supposed punishment of original sin. If painful labor were a curse on Eve, resting on all her posterity, what should exempt the women of savage life, the negro slave, or the healthy and hardy peasantry of Europe, from its operation? The Indian woman, living in the open air, a stranger to the weakening refinements of civilization, knowing nothing of dyspepsia or hysterics, with no idea of spinal disease or prolapsus uteri, when she feels the signs of coming labor, repairs to the nearest brook, gives birth to her child, it may be amid the snows of winter, washes it and herself in cold water, and is ready to resume her journey, without hindering her party more than half a day. The women of nature have no such word as "confinement," a word so appropriate in civilization.

The great truth to be learned by everybody is, that gestation and parturition are natural processes. It is as natural for a woman to bring forth children as for a shrub to produce flowers and fruit; and her organs are as naturally adapted for the purpose. In a state of health no natural process is painful. Pain is, in all cases, the sign of disease. It has no other use or significance. With a sore throat it is painful to swallow; with a diseased stomach digestion is painful; so is childbirth painful to a diseased nervous system, but never to an entirely healthy one.

There is no more certain fact in physiology, than that the nerves of organic life, in a healthy condition, are not susceptible of pain. They acquire a morbid sensibility in disease. Thus all the involuntary functions of life are carried on without our consciousness. We breathe, sleeping and waking, without effort or pain, until some portion of the respiratory system becomes diseased, and then each breath may be a labor and a pang. So the strong heart works on, year after year, expanding and contracting its four receptacles, and pouring the tide of life through a thousand channels, and we are

never conscious of the working of this wonderful engine until some of its apparatus becomes impaired by disease. So the stomach receives the food, expands, contracts, keeps up a churning motion, and for many hours every day labors in the function of digestion. No healthy person is conscious of even having a stomach; but the poor dyspeptic knows it to his sorrow. It is the same with the alimentary canal, with the liver, the kidneys, the bladder, and not less so with the uterus. Conception, gestation, and parturition are the natural functions of this organ and its appendages; and nature has made no mistake in adapting it to its proper work. Its nerves, like those of the stomach, the heart, and all the nerves of organic life, are not nerves of sensation in their healthy state; and it is only in their diseased condition that they are liable to pain. In its healthy condition, the uterus receives the germ of a new being, provides it with its proper nourishment, expands to make room for its development, and, at the time appointed by nature, dilates its opening, and contracts, by a series of involuntary and painless muscular efforts, so as to throw the infant into the new existence which its growth demands. It performs its own proper functions just as the lungs, the heart, or the stomach perform theirs; because it was formed by the same Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, who ordained that pain and sorrow should be the consequence of sin, and who ordains that health and happiness shall ever be the result of obedience to the laws of life.

It is not credible that any natural function should be attended with pain in a healthy state of the system. All nature protests against such an idea—all experience is opposed to it. Causes and effects are too well adapted to each other—ends and means too admirably fitted. This world is the work of infinite power and benevolence, and the human system is the masterpiece of all this fair creation. It is not to be supposed that the most important of all the functions of the most perfect of created beings of whom we have any knowledge should be subject to inevitable pain and peril in its performance. Such a belief is an insult to Providence. When God looked upon His creation, and pronounced it good, He could not have overlooked the most important function of His last and most perfect work; and there can be no question, that in the original creation of woman, she was fitted to obey the command, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth," without peril or pain. The very idea of the curse inflicted upon her carries with it the belief that she was originally created perfect in this particu-

lar. Has there been any change, then, and if so, what is its nature?

There is no more reason to believe that the bony pelvis has changed its form than that the head or chest have been altered in their relative dimensions. On the contrary, in all healthy subjects the size of the pelvis is now found to be admirably adapted to the size of the fœtus, at the period of its full development. There is no more reason to suppose that the uterus is by nature less adapted to its functions than the eyes or ears are to theirs. No, nature has not changed; woman is, in her healthy condition, the same glorious being that she was when she first came from the hands of the Creator.

What then has made the change? Why is woman subjected to all her pains, sufferings, outrages, and perils in the performance of the great function of her life? It is because the forbidden fruit of enervating luxuries and excesses is continually eaten. And just in proportion as women transgress the laws of nature, which are the real and unquestionable commands of God, just so far are they subject to the curse.

Man has it in his power to incur all direst curses by transgression; or to avoid all curses, and invoke all blessings, by obedience to the divine law. Industry makes of the barren earth another Eden. Temperance and cleanliness give health, and health brings happiness in all the duties of life. So it is with woman. Indolence, self-indulgence, voluptuousness, and all sins against the laws which God has written in the structure of our bodies, bring with them the curse of deranged nervous systems, broken health, irregularity of function, disease, pain, and premature death. Every woman is an Eve, and forbidden fruits are all around her. If she listen to the voice of the beguiling serpent, hers is the woe. But, on the other hand, faith in God, obedience to His laws, and living in harmony with His works, assure to woman health, and safety, and joy in fulfilling all her destiny. These are truths pregnant with meaning, and incontrovertible as the principles of nature.

In my work already referred to, I have treated, as fully as the space admitted, of the conditions of health and the causes of disease. I wish every person who reads this article to get that little book, and give it a careful perusal; and I shall be acquitted of any mercenary motive in giving this advice, when I state that I made a present of the copyright to the publishers, on the sole condition that it should be published at the nominal price of twelve and a

half cents, and so freely advertised as to secure a wide circulation. In this article I can but briefly allude to the causes which have brought upon civilized women their multiplied miseries.

By the immutable laws of nature, the sins of parents are visited upon their children to the third and fourth generation; consequently, women are born scrofulous, weak, and often with bodies imperfectly developed, and tendencies to spinal and pelvic deformities, forbidding the possibility of healthy and natural labors. All such women must suffer; but even to them, obedience brings its rewards; and their health can be greatly improved, and in most cases their unfortunate liabilities lessened.

In consequence of the wise adaptation of the human lungs and skin to the atmosphere, the free access of pure air, from the first moment of independent life, is of the highest necessity; yet our women, even more than our men, are smothered and poisoned all their lives, and while they should breathe pure air, day and night, at all times, they are almost continually deprived of it. In the curtained cradle, the close bedroom, the heated nursery, the crowded school-room, the unventilated church, ball-room, theater, and through a whole life of falseness and luxury, the blood never gets its share of oxygen, and the whole system becomes loaded with impurities. Every organ becomes weakened and every function deranged. What can we expect but disease and suffering from such violations of nature?

Activity is a great law of our being. Heart and lungs, and all the alimentary and excretory systems are ever at work; and it is the evident intention of nature, that every faculty of the mind, and every voluntary nerve and muscle of the body, shall have its seasons of activity and repose. Exercise, full, and varied, and abundant, is a condition of health. Do our women get it? Not one in a hundred. Imprisoned in school-rooms, drilled into proprieties, taught to dawdle in drawing-rooms, made to knit, and sew, and embroider when they should run about the fields, or work in gardens, they exercise in rocking chairs, and get fatigued with a shopping excursion: or, on the other hand, compelled to labor from morning till night at severe and monotonous employments, they break down with over-exertion. Either as the doll-baby or the slave of civilization, woman is wronged in her whole nature and suffers for the wrong; and all society suffers with her.

It has been demonstrated that the right performance of all the functions of life depends upon their harmony. If one vital organ

be impeded in its action, the whole system suffers; and there is no more vital organ than the skin, which requires air and light, and especially cleanliness. It is hard to imagine that any woman neglects the law of cleanliness; but I can call no woman cleanly, much less delicate and refined, who neglects the daily ablution of her whole body. This will be a hard saying to many; but it is my business to write the truth; and the laws of nature and the conditions of health are not to be neglected with impunity. Whatever hydrophobic doctors, in their anger at the progress of the Water Cure, may say, a daily bath is to every woman the condition of decency, of comfort, of health, and of beauty, which health alone can give. I make no exception. She needs a daily cold or tepid bath, at all times and in all conditions. A daily bath is more needed at her monthly periods than at other times. It is never more required than during pregnancy: it promotes wonderfully the ease of parturition, and is the great restorative provided by nature, and sought by instinct, even among savages, as soon as this work is accomplished.

A pure nutrition is an indispensable condition of healthy development and action. No nervous system can retain its integrity when loaded down by the poisons of tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, spices, and drugs. No woman can partake of this forbidden fruit without experiencing the curse—the curses of her sex. There can not be a disordered stomach without a weakened uterus. Every such indulgence is a draft upon the capital of life, to be paid with a heavy interest of pain.

Even in dress, women have sinned against nature with a strange perversity. I never meet a young woman in the street, with a waist laced into half or one third its natural dimensions, without a sigh of pity at the thought of the terrible penalty she must pay for such unnatural folly—such ridiculous depravity; for in what can human depravity be greater than in the profanity of marring the works of God? In a chest and abdomen so distorted, neither lungs, nor liver, nor stomach, nor intestines can perform their functions. The system can not receive a healthy nutrition, the blood can not be purified, and what then can be expected of the crowning function of life? In women whose bodies have been so tortured and abused, gestation must be a long disease, terminated by miscarriage, abortion, or a perilous and painful labor, with puny and miserable offspring. Oh! woman, blush for your folly—tremble at your guilt. What was the sin of Eve compared with your daily

violations of the laws of God, written on the fairest and most perfect of His divine works?

The system of reproduction suffers from every violation of the laws of health, and from every injury to the organs of any other function; but it suffers above all, from the irregular or excessive action of its own organism. Stimulated to premature development and excessive activity, by all the luxuries of artificial life, the reproductive system is broken down, its health destroyed, and what should be the happiness, the delight, and glory of woman, becomes her dread, her misery, and her despair. It seems to me that I need not speak more plainly of what, alas! so many of my readers must too easily comprehend.

And when one, or several, or all these causes of disease produce their legitimate effect upon the female constitution; when pallor and languor take the place of rosy health and energy; when there come loss of appetite, and nervous palpitations, and hysterical sobbings; when there is suppression of the menses, or painful menstruation, pain in the back, a sinking of the stomach, a dragging sensation between the hips; when to these symptoms of nervous and uterine disorder are added whites and falling of the womb, medical aid must be resorted to, and then begins, too often, a new catalogue of wrongs and abuses.

Thousands of women, especially the young and delicate, suffer years of torture, before they can be forced to seek for medical advice, and no one can blame them. When I see how women are treated, I have no words for my indignation. All I can do is to go on steadily and earnestly in the work of enlightening the world. I would not be thought rude or uncharitable; I wish to treat the profession with courtesy, but I must also treat it with justice. I am therefore compelled to say that there is throughout the medical profession, with but few exceptions, a deplorable ignorance of the causes, the nature, and treatment of female diseases. I do not blame men for this—it is their misfortune, and the misfortune of those who rely upon their skill. Books, and professors, and practitioners are alike in the dark. But there is something worse than mere ignorance. Where men do not know what to do, and are called upon to do something, they are very likely to do wrong. Thus women are drugged into an aggravation of all their evils; they are outraged by frequent and useless examinations; they are made to wear useless or hurtful mechanical contrivances—the most miserable of all palliations; and to crown the whole, they are leeches

and cauterized day after day, and week after week, until death itself would be a welcome refuge from their sufferings.*

I do not fear to write these things, for many men and almost all women know that they are true. I denounce the whole system as ignorant or corrupt, and in either case barbarous. There are comparatively few cases of female disease where an examination is called for, and in these a single examination is all that is necessary. The exposure, from which sensitive women suffer more than death, is all the worse, because it is unnecessary. There is not one case in ten where doctors pretend to find, and where they honestly think they do find, ulceration, or schirrhus, or cancer of the womb, that they really exist. There is not one case in a hundred where they apply lunar caustic that it is needed, even by the rules of their own system; and no man needs to burn when he knows how to heal. These caustic doctors are like the other quack who made every kind of sore a burn, and then sold his salve to cure burns.

If such be the "regular" treatment of female diseases, what are we to expect when the physician comes to the bedside of the parturient woman? We have here the same unnatural and often outrageous treatment. Here, where august nature should reign supreme, her laws are too often violated, and all her teachings set at naught. Instead of preparing a woman to go through the process of labor with all the energy of her vitality, she is weakened by medication and blood-letting. Instead of being put upon a proper regimen, and a diet suited to her condition, she is more than ever pampered and indulged. And when labor comes on, the chances are that it will be interfered with in the most mistaken, the most unjustifiable, and too often the most outrageous manner. The uterus will be stimulated into excessive and spasmodic action by the deadly ergot; the mother, at this most interesting and sa-

* The almost universally diseased condition of civilized women, and the equally universal ignorance of the nature, causes, and proper treatment of their diseases, have exposed the sex to the most odious and mischievous quackeries. Our drug stores are filled with pretended remedies; and women are made to wear irritating pessaries, supporters, and other instruments of torture. Regular practitioners grow rich, and quacks make rapid fortunes, by these devices, which may well be called infernal. A recently patented instrument for prolapsus uteri is valued by the inventor at ten thousand dollars, and a new catholicon is held at fifty thousand. The instrument is a stupid and torturing humbug; the medicine a mischievous compound; and both are designed to plunder the ignorant and suffering. So odious and shameful is this whole business, that I am determined it shall be broken up, if I have to devote the best years of my life to the work.

cred hour of life, will be made dead drunk with ether or chloroform, both preparations of alcohol; and if a weakened and derauged system does not act as promptly as the doctor wishes, he proceeds to deliver with instruments, with the risk, often the certainty, of destroying the child, and very often inflicting upon the mother irreparable injury.

A fashionable physician, such as we have too many of in this city, finds a patient in labor; he looks at his watch and says this child must be born in an hour; and if the labor does not proceed rapidly enough to suit him, he administers the dose of ergot, which he always has ready. Frightful contractions ensue; the birth of the child is accompanied with rupture of the peritoneum, inversion of the uterus, or, at the least, is followed by terrible prolapsus; and it sometimes happens that such treatment causes instant death by rupture of the uterus. This is no fancy sketch, but a history of actual cases in the practice of some of the most distinguished of our obstetric practitioners. There are others who, on all occasions, are accompanied by a case of terrific instruments; and, if a labor is protracted, instead of waiting for the operations of nature, and aiding her efforts by gentle and justifiable appliances, they proceed to drag the infant into the world by the forceps, or plunge a perforator through its skull, or tear its limbs piecemeal from the abused and tortured victim of such barbarity. Who shall say how many of the eleven hundred still-born children, registered in the office of the City Inspector, in a single year, were "scientifically" murdered in this fashionable practice of midwifery?*

* I fearlessly appeal to the wise, the gentle, and the really skillful of the medical profession—for many such there are, and well would it be for humanity if there were more—if I have misstated the facts, or spoken too severely of the treatment of female diseases, and the practice of midwifery, by professional mountebanks of high standing in this community? I am perfectly aware of the ground I stand upon, and understand the abuses I mean to remedy. It is but justice to state that the practices I denounce and would remedy have been pointedly condemned by some of the most distinguished men in the profession. Professor Bedford, of the University of New York, has very severely criticised many of these abuses; and Marshall Hall, one of the most distinguished medical writers in Europe, in denouncing frequent examinations, and the abuse of the speculum, in a late number of the *Lancet*, says:

"I have seen cases in which the speculum and caustic having been employed—and unduly employed as I believe—the patient remained more miserably afflicted in mind and body than ever, and this the effect of that treatment. I will not advert even to the epithets which have been applied to the frequent use of the speculum by our French neighbors, who are so skilled in these matters; but I will ask, what father among us, after the details which I have given, would allow his virgin daughter to be subject to this 'pollution'? Let us, then, maintain the spotless

These outrages have been borne, because women have been so strangely ignorant of the laws and functions of their own beings, that they have not known how they were abused; and because, in pain, and sickness, and in the hour of peril, these doctors have been their only resource. In denouncing the ignorance and malpractices of so great a part of the medical profession, I well know what I shall encounter from them and their blind and bigoted adherents. I know that the very quackeries I denounce, indecent and detestable as they are, make up a large portion of the regular practice of medicine. Daily useless examinations and mischievous cauterizations are exceedingly profitable. One man—if I do not too much insult humanity in giving him that appellation—residing in the vicinity of New York, has made these female diseases a speciality; and if the men of New York knew how he has deceived, and outraged, and plundered their wives, and sisters, and daughters, they would visit upon him a heavier retribution than the London brewers and coal-heavers inflicted upon the Austrian butcher! The infamy of his bold quackeries and obscene manipulations would make the paper blush on which it was written. I have known of case after case which he has maltreated; and I know of no case in which, after a time, and when the peculiar excitement he induces has lost its effect, the patient has not sunk into a worse condition. Many of his patients, filled with shame at the outrages to which they had ignorantly and uselessly submitted, have since been entirely restored to health by the Water-Cure. I am happy in believing that this man is not recognized as a “regular” physician by the faculty.

The Water-Cure is fast becoming known to the whole world, and recognized by all intelligent minds to be what I have elsewhere described it—“a comprehensive system, founded in nature and adapted to the wants of man.” The rapidity and certainty of its remedial action in acute, and its power over chronic, diseases; its absolute efficacy in all derangements of the human system; its marvellous cures of cases which have for years defied every other system of medication; these, with its simplicity, its universality, its beauty and harmony with nature, have attracted to hydropathy

dignity of our profession, with its well-deserved character for purity of morals, and throw aside this injurious practice with indignant scorn, remembering that it is not mere exposure of the person, but the dulling of the edge of virgin modesty, and the degradation of the pure minds of the daughters of England, which are to be avoided.”

the sympathy and confidence of all intellectual persons, who have given the subject the least examination.

But the most brilliant triumphs of Water-Cure have been and are to be achieved in the treatment of the diseases of women, and in carrying them safely, and, as far as can be, painlessly, through the period of gestation and the processes of parturition. The treatment of female diseases by the Water-Cure is all that the common system is not, in its rationale, its processes, and its results. It looks to the causes of disease, some of the principal of which I have already enumerated, and does not insanely set to work in the hope of removing an effect while the cause is allowed to continue. It surrounds the patient with all the conditions of health, and trusting to the recuperative energies of nature, aids them by the inventions of art; and by adapting its processes to the nature of the disease and the condition of the patient, effects a thorough and permanent cure.

In bringing about a cure, it may be necessary to excite the action of the skin by the wet sheet pack and the douche; we may have to cure the dyspepsia, the liver complaint, or the spinal disease, which is at once the cause and the complication of the uterine difficulty; we support the falling womb with the wet bandage; we give tone by frequent sitz baths and vaginal injections; in a word, we give health, and strength, and energy to the whole system, and cure all its disorders.

In the adaptation of Water-Cure to the conditions of pregnancy and childbirth, its efficacy comes so near the miraculous, that I hardly expect to be believed. The Water-Cure preparation for childbirth is to establish the highest condition of health. We prevent the nausea and vomitings of a diseased nervous system; we continually strengthen the muscles of the abdomen; we daily give tone and energy to the organs of reproduction; and when we have produced that state of health which belongs to the woman of nature, we trust nature to do her own work, giving all the aid she requires, and careful not to obstruct or derange her beneficent operations.

It is the disgrace of the medical profession, that ignorant women—ignorant in these things, though instructed in a thousand matters of less importance—are imposed upon by physicians in the most shameful and mercenary manner. Even grave medical books teach students of midwifery how to deceive their patients. Thus women believe that the fetus lies in the womb with its head upward, and that the doctor can assist it in turning over, when about to be

born! Thus doctors allow women to think they can assist in enlarging the passage through which the child must pass, and violate all decency as well as all honesty in pretending to do so, with mischievous manipulations; but there is no end to the devices by which a mercenary profession imposes on popular ignorance.

The pain of labor is caused by the dilatations and contractions of diseased organs. Free those organs from disease and their natural functions are never accompanied with pain. In numerous instances I have known the os uteri to dilate completely, the uterus to contract, and the child to be born with from one to three contractions, accompanied by so little pain as to scarcely discompose the countenance. This has been the case, not with Indian women, nor negroes, nor Irish washerwomen, but with delicate ladies, who, in their previous confinements, had had great suffering, but who had obtained all this blessed relief by means of the Water-Cure.

I can point out cases of this kind all over the city of New York. Many of them have been published in the Water-Cure Journal; there are a number in Mrs. Nichols' "EXPERIENCE IN WATER-CURE"—a book every woman should read; and such cases are constantly occurring in our practice.

Let me not be understood as saying that all our cases of childbirth in Water-Cure are as painless as those to which I have alluded. I am called to cases where there has been no preparatory treatment; to others, in which such treatment has been partial, or of short duration. In cases where the patient has taken the Water-Cure, the relief from pain and the shortening of the labor are the measure of the benefit derived from the treatment. It is in cases where the preparation has been thorough and complete that childbirth is almost entirely deprived of its pains and perils.

In such cases, with patients who have suffered greatly in previous confinements, the labor has been so short and so easy, that they were scarcely able to say whether the contractions of the uterus and expulsive efforts were accompanied with pain. In my last three cases, which occurred on three successive nights, I was not in either detained over two hours, and these were far from being the most favorable. "Are these efforts painful?" was asked of one lady, a short time before the babe was born. "No," she replied; "it seems as if I had rather make them than not;" and now, in speaking of her confinement, when from habit she says, "When

I was sick," she corrects herself, by saying, "No, I am wrong, for *I was not sick* at all."*

These wonders of the Water-Cure are so numerous, and yet so incredible to those who are unacquainted with its powers, that every one who feels an interest in the matter ought to make personal inquiry; and I shall be happy to give any one the names of many ladies who are zealous in the good cause, and who will be very glad to give their own experience for the good of others.

But it is not only the time that is shortened in childbirth, and the pain that is lessened, but the danger is almost, and in all cases of natural labor, entirely removed by the treatment pursued. If the action of the uterus lingers, we give no poisonous and uncontrollable ergot; the cold sitz bath acts like a charm in bringing on frequent and regular contractions. Convulsions are unknown in our treatment. Floodings are checked with great certainty, in all cases, by the application of cold water, and are prevented after labor by cold injections into the vagina, and the wet bandage. I have never had a case which I could not leave with safety in half an hour after the birth of the child, with an absolute certainty that the mother was in entire comfort—the after-birth removed, the mother bathed and bandaged, her linen changed, and she removed to a clean bed and

* In a little tract, entitled "The Water-Cure," prepared by Mrs. Nichols, for gratuitous circulation, she says:

"The writer has had a large obstetric practice for several years, and has never had a patient who was not able to take an entire cold bath, and sit up and walk, the day after the birth of a child. I need not say that life would often be the forfeit of even rising from the bed at an early period after delivery, where patients are treated after the old methods. The water treatment strengthens the mother so that she obtains a great immunity from suffering during the period of labor, and enables her to sit up and walk about during the first two days after delivery. In all the writer's practice, and in the practice of other Water-Cure physicians, she has never known an instance of the least evil resulting from this treatment."

The same writer published the following in the April number of the Water-Cure Journal:

"I have been very much gratified with several births that have recently come under my care. One young lady, who was really far from strong, but who had been living very carefully on Water-Cure principles through her pregnancy, encouraged and supported by a strong, earnest husband, suffered slightly one quarter of an hour. Another, with a first child, and whose friends frightened her all in their power, took the cure under my care, and when she was delivered she could hardly be said to suffer at all. I was uncertain whether the expulsive efforts were accompanied with pain. I said, after the birth, "Were these efforts painful?" She hesitated, and then said, "Slightly." The same day she sat up and held her babe, and said she felt well. Another, the last case I had. The babe was born with three expulsive efforts, each of which was somewhat painful. *This was all.* The lady was up the day after the birth, and about house, as usual, in a week."

ready to get some hours of refreshing sleep. As to fatal flooding, or peritoneal inflammation, after childbirth, I have never heard of a case of either under Water-Cure management, nor do I believe such a thing possible, so surely are they guarded against by this mode of treatment. After-pains, so common with the ordinary treatment, are scarcely known in this; and the rapidity of recovery is in proportion to the immunity from suffering and danger. In many cases, the patient feels as well as ever on the third day. Every patient gets up the first day, takes a sitz bath, and is washed all over, taking two such baths daily. A week may be considered a fair period of convalescence, and I would not advise any patient to venture out under that period. I have seldom found it necessary to make more than two visits after confinement.

I have given a simple statement of facts connected with the treatment of female diseases and management in childbirth by the Water-Cure, as practiced by Mrs. Nichols for some years, and more recently by myself. Our methods may differ somewhat from those of other Water-Cure practitioners, but they are such as we have found to be in all respects satisfactory. No woman who has once experienced the blessings of this treatment would ever choose any other, and there is no doubt that as fast as it is made known it will be everywhere adopted.

And now, in conclusion, let me recapitulate some of the benefits that the Water-Cure offers to women.

It relieves their weaknesses, and cures their peculiar diseases, without exposure, without indelicate examinations or manipulations, and the dangerous applications of the actual or potential cautery.

It does away utterly with the cumbrous, disgusting, and mischievous instruments which women have been compelled to wear, to their great annoyance and real injury.

It restores the tone of the entire system, gives action and energy to all their organs and functions, and prepares them to perform the duties and enjoy the happiness of the marriage relation.

It carries them safely through the period of gestation, preserving their health, increasing their strength, and preparing them, in the best possible manner, for the period of maternity.

It greatly shortens the duration, and mitigates and often almost entirely prevents the pain of childbirth.

It allows the immediate removal of the placenta, and prevents hemorrhage and after-pains.

It removes all danger of puerperal fever and inflammation—diseases from which thousands of women yearly perish.

It secures a rapid recovery, and a certain freedom from prolapsus uteri, and other affections, which so often follow childbirth with the ordinary treatment.

It gives the best promise and security that can be given of healthy and well-developed offspring. The comfort, cheerfulness, and hope of the mother seem to have the most happy influence upon the character and constitution of the child.

And, by these influences, the Water-Cure realizes our title of "THE CURSE REMOVED."

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Dr. Nichols is a thoroughly educated physician, and from our knowledge of him as a man and a public writer we can vouch for his ability and rely on his candor and the honesty of purpose which guides him to his conclusions.—*Kalida Venture*.

We have read this work, and as soon as it arrives in town we advise every one of our readers to get a copy, read it carefully, and ponder well on the truths it contains. This little book is not one of the mere literary vesicles of the hour, that are floating upon the surface of society, beautiful to the eye, but of no earthly use. It contains food for reflection and vitally interests every reader, for it tells him intelligibly how to preserve to the latest period of life that most precious of all earthly boons—HEALTH. Dr. Nichols is a writer of no ordinary merit. His style is simple, cogent, and perspicuous.—*Louisiana Spectator*.

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