

**WATER-CURE FOR LADIES: A POPULAR
WORK ON THE HEALTH, DIET, AND
REGIMEN OF FEMALES AND CHILDREN,
AND THE PREVENTION AND CURE OF
DISEASES; WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF
THE PROCESSES OF WATER-CURE**

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Water-Cure for Ladies: A Popular Work on the Health, Diet, and Regimen of Females and Children, and the Prevention and Cure of Diseases; With a Full Account of the Processes of Water-Cure by Mrs. M. L. Shew

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MRS. M. L. SHEW

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FEMALES AND CHILDREN, AND THE PREVENTION
AND CURE OF DISEASES;

WITH

A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE PROCESSES OF WATER-CURE;

Illustrated with various Cases:

By Mrs. M. L. SHEW,

REVISED BY JOEL SHEW, M. D.

PRACTITIONER OF WATER-CURE.

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PREFACE.

THE writer believes in "temperance in all things." To understand how to be thus temperate, requires an amount of physiological knowledge possessed by few. It implies neither more nor less than the best taking care of the health of the body. To do this, people must learn to *think for themselves*. The custom of society is not thus. By far too much, we have been in the habit of trusting our health to keepers whose profession and interest are not always most favorable. Physicians are employed to *cure*, not to *prevent* disease. Not so should it be; but

"All things are weighed in *custom's falsest scale*,
Opinion, an omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should beam too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light."

In consequence of peculiar associations in life, the writer has had occasion to witness not a little in the common practice of medicine. She has consequently seen much of drugs, and has in her own person (and who has not ?) *experienced* their effects. She has seen, and *experienced*, too, the wonderful effects of water. Water-cure is truly "a new world in the healing art."

Poisonous drugs have done incalculable injury. If the dead could speak, how many might truly say, in the words of the old epitaph, "*I was well. I took physic, and here I lie.*" But says one, "So Sir Francis Burdett could say, 'I wore

water-cure bandages, and here I lie." Did Sir Francis kill himself by water? According to the English papers, "The doctors say, he was a devotee of the water-cure, and overdid the matter by keeping himself incessantly bandaged in wet cloths." But it is to be very much doubted whether the matter was "overdone" with Sir Francis. It were easy for doctors to set up a bugbear in water-cure, by talking of *cold wet cloths and chilling wet sheets*, and the like, learnedly discoursing of things untried and not at all understood. But if water has power, (which it must have, to cure,) it can be, and *has been* overdone.

What have we for curative means in our country at the present time? Besides regular practitioners to almost any extent, in our various papers we find in abundance flaming advertisements of medicines, cures, and curers, all well and wisely attested. Then there are Life Pills, Hygeian Pills, Golden Pills, and Pills every thing; Panaceas, Elixirs, Pain Extractors, &c., &c. Then, also, those *infinitesimal* doses of charcoal, cattle-fish juice, and the like, which, by the way, with good diet, drink, and firm confidence, do *truly* work wonders. There is also that strange agency by which it is pretended that a person, perhaps a youth not yet in teens, may be enabled *mesmerically* to describe any or all the internal organs of the body, to define its diseases, and to prescribe appropriate remedies. So it is; medicines and remedial means have been multiplied without number, and to what purpose, through water-cure, people are fast beginning to learn. Drug medicines cannot be depended upon. *Not one* of the whole number; and this is the true reason why they have been thus multiplied.

Here is a difference between water-cure and drug systems—a most important one. Water-cure rightly administered is *always entirely safe, and will do good*. Not so with poison drugs. Even in small doses they sometimes produce fatal results. They *always* produce diseased action.

: Who does not know how frequently infants and children

have been drugged to death. We are not now speaking of physicians. But physicians often do injury with their drugs. Both the medicine and the food they recommend are often most pernicious. Contrast with the common treatment in medicine the following case:

It was that of a child seven months of age. This infant having lost its mother at its birth, a wet nurse was procured, such as was considered by the physicians to be a healthy one. The child was removed to a plantation, where ague and fever was common. After remaining awhile, the nurse was taken with the ague, and subsequently the child. Both had the disease severely. At the commencement the nurse (a young woman) was healthy and strong. Her diet and general regimen were, however, as bad as could well be;—consisting much of bacon, fine bread, butter, gravies, very strong tea and coffee, wines, &c., which things, also, the child was taught to take. The usual anodyne and purgative medicines were taken by the nurse, and given to the child. At first, the little one was the picture of health and cheerfulness. At seven months, in an almost dying state, it was necessary to take it from the nurse. Its eyes were glassy—its head languidly dropping upon the shoulder, and its naturally clear and white skin had changed to a uniform yellow, almost like that of a mulatto. Its lips were compressed, and of nearly the same color as the face. It was of course much emaciated—its cheeks hanging down, and its whole expression one of continual suffering. For weeks it had not been seen to smile. It was now put under the water-cure treatment, and at the same time weaned. The chill and fever took place every other day. At first, on “the well day,” wet sheet, sweating was produced, accompanied by various bathings. Never before had the child been given a drop of water. Now it took it greedily, and soon rejected its accustomed drinks. On the “sick day,” it being the second of the cure, very active treatment prevented the chill and fever, and it was never allowed to return.

Will any one say that quinine, or any other poison could have accomplished such a cure? It could easily have been given so as "to break the fits," but how much the constitution of the child would have suffered, is not pleasant for the writer to contemplate. It was very strongly recommended that quinine should *by all means* be given. A most obstinate habitual constipation, by drinking, bathing, and pure water injections, was also cured. The little girl is now one year old, with rosy cheeks, ruby lips, and all that is lovely and desirable in a child. Yes, she is even now before us, and her bright expressive eye and merry laugh tell of the wonders of cold water; and the physicians have acknowledged that they never saw so great a change in health and appearance, in so short a time.

Where opportunity offers, such cures can easily and safely be performed by any who are sufficiently acquainted with the human system, and the treatment by water; and by what means can the physical condition of our race be more effectually bettered, than by the universal spread of such knowledge, not only among men, *but among women?* In reference to the diet of this interesting child, it was early educated to take various improper things. At and before weaning, it was fond of cakes, sweetmeats, candies, and the like. It would not take bread at all, unless well buttered. Now it utterly refuses all these things. It is more fond of good fruit, bread and milk, than any thing else. It refuses the milk that is generally used in this city.

In this case an honored and experienced professor in one of our oldest medical colleges, strongly recommended *quinine* to break the fits, and *wine* to give strength. Respecting wines and other alcoholic preparations so often recommended and given in cases of children as well as adults, can any give a rational explanation *how* alcohol can act beneficially in the living system? It is a deadly poison, and so volatile that it at once permeates the animal membranes, and "spreads itself throughout the body in all directions,"

to the most delicate parts, as the brain and nerves. Is it said that "it is a prompt diffusible stimulant, which has the power speedily to excite general organic action throughout the system?" We answer, such stimulation is but temporary, and is unnatural;—that the organic action is in the end lowered in proportion to the stimulation used—that the tissues are always poisoned and their vitality destroyed in proportion to the amount of alcohol taken.

If water-cure is in reality what we, its advocates, claim, what a discovery for the world will it prove to be! When its doctrines shall be understood by all, what advantages will it bring! Mankind will not then be under the necessity of ransacking all nature for medicine to cure. The rills, the running streams, the springs, the pure rivers, and crystal lakes, and the pure snow and rain from the clouds of heaven, how abundant their supply! The poor man with his wife, and little ones, though far away from society, and many of the so-called comforts of civic life, can have in abundance this best medicine. The water-cure teaches, too, that nature's wants are always few. How many an unfortunate family there is, who think hard of the ways of society, and of Heaven, and whose comforts are "like angels' visits," and yet who are habitually spending for their tea, coffee, tobacco, and various pernicious and life-destroying things, more than would be sufficient to make their condition comfortable. The plain and simple food and fruits, in general, so easily obtained and prepared—the pure water for ablutions and for drink—and the pure air of heaven to breathe, if understood, what health and enjoyment would they give?

The water-cure system is pre-eminently calculated to improve mankind in the preventing of disease. Respecting this there is but little known. In relation to our bodies, it is little understood how much *small* things go to make up a certain whole. It should ever be remembered that there is law in every thing. "A constant dropping wears