

**THE CHANGE OF LIFE IN
WOMEN AND
THE ILLS AND AILINGS
INCIDENT THERETO**

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The change of life in women and the ills and ailments incident thereto by J. Compton Burnett

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J. COMPTON BURNETT

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THE CHANGE OF LIFE
IN WOMEN

FOREWORD.

I HAVE myself never heard a clinical lecture on the menopause that was the least help to me in my medical work, or one that afforded, to my mind, the least satisfaction; neither have I ever read any article or book on the subject that offered me either mental enlightenment or practical advantage. As far as I know my way about in medical literature, the menopause is, to say the least, a very dark region indeed, wherein we are left to grope about in quest of unknown quasi-ghostlike awfulnesses.

I have always tried at least to strike a match in any dark corner where medical mysteries midst ghostly terrors most abound; and although the illumination emanating

from one solitary match is not exactly blinding, still it is more helpful than utter darkness.

If my readers find this little work even of one-match power only, I shall not regret the labour of writing it.

J. COMPTON BURNETT.

86 WHITEHOLE STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE,
East, 1898.



*The Change of Life in Women,
and the Ills and Ailings Incident
thereto.*

IT stands in evil repute does the change of life in women; and when a more than usually curious patient enquires of us the nature of this or that, and we reply, "Oh, it's the change of life!" a more or less sufficient reason is thereby supposedly given, and the woman is heard resignedly to exclaim, "Ah, I suppose I must expect trouble at my time of life!" But

why should poor woman expect trouble at the change of life? That she does, as a matter of fact, often suffer at and after that time of life is all too evident; but again, Why?

Surely the thing can be accounted for, and measures taken to prevent, cure, or palliate said sufferings.

Girls are more forward than boys at a given early age up to the loomings of the menses, as any of us can see in our own families; but no sooner does menstruation begin than the superiority of the girl over the boy is at an end. The boy slowly gains upon her, and becomes more aggressive, and the girl more retiring.

The explanation of this lies close at hand,—the girl's digestion and assimilation are so arranged that

she shall for some thirty years or so of her life's course, from puberty to menopause, make blood enough for her own maintenance and activities plus what should or might be needed for gestation and lactation, the menstruation being primarily a means of maintaining her equipoise by throwing overboard at stated times a given not-called-for blood supply, prepared by the time of each ovulation as a possibly needed food reserve, which throwing overboard of said supercargo does not occur if impregnation of the ovule take place. It is this menstrual arrangement which must be kept in view if we are to understand the change of life and its sequels, and indeed if we are to understand women's diseases at all at any period.

The resignation of many women to their various sufferings is to me often absolutely astonishing, and many times have I enquired of my professors, of books, of myself, and finally of old mother Nature, what this change really is. It is not a little instructive to work out clinical problems for one's self, just as they really are, without the god-fatherhood of schoolmen, who often seem to me to stand between truth and one's mental vision: we very commonly learn our professors' teachings only, and never see the things themselves.

UNOBSCURED BY PRECONCEPTIONS.

The importance of the change of life in the practice of medical men, notably in those who see much of