

victims whose names will never be made public but who have parted with their money for this worthless device?

"SCARE" METHODS

Like all medical fakes, the sale for this is stimulated by attempts to frighten the susceptible. The dangers and frequency of strangulation in hernia are harped on throughout the advertising matter and hair-raising pictures of people in deadly peril are used to play still more on the fears of those suffering from rupture. In one of the circulars there is a faked reproduction of an envelope sent out by the Stuart concern and returned to it with the inscription "Returned to writer: Dead" stamped on it.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

One more point connected with this concern and we are through. The following statements appear in the advertising matter sent out by the plaster pad company:

"The utmost privacy is always maintained in all our correspondence and business relations."

"No one need hesitate to write us fully and completely regarding their case, as all letters are held in strictest confidence."

In spite of this statement, we find advertised for sale by one of the largest letter brokers in the country, listed under "Rupture Letters" no fewer than 17,566 letters of the Stuart Plaster Pad Company. Privacy indeed!

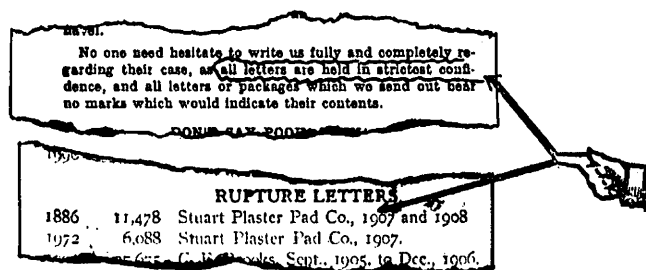


Fig. 3.—Photographic reproductions (1) of Stuart's advertising matter, where the assertion is made that "all letters are held in strictest confidence"; (2) of a portion of a price list issued by a firm that makes a business of buying and selling letters that have been sent in to mail-order medical fakes. It will be noticed that this firm has more than 17,000 Stuart Plaster Pad Co.'s letters for sale. Confidential, indeed!

To sum up, we have in the Papao Laboratories, Inc., a concern that promises to cure rupture by means of a piece of adhesive plaster and a little ointment. The device is exploited both directly to the public by newspapers and indirectly to the public through the instrumentality of medical journals and of physicians who will sell the names of sufferers of hernia for the price of a cheap thermometer. Purchasers are obtained through fake analyses and misleading testimonials. Finally, individuals who have been unwise enough to answer Stuart's advertisements or who have been unfortunate enough to have their names sent in by a local physician, have had their names sold to letter brokers to be bought by any person, anywhere, who is willing to pay the few cents necessary to obtain them.

A Testimonial.—The following letter was received by a maker of liniment at Carmine, Tex., according to the *Chicago Tribune*: "Mrs. Hattie Louis says her sister have ben sick 6 weeks and 5 doctors treated her but fail to do her any good then she went to the horse pittle and the doctors claim there they could not reach her case. She wer swelling so she could not lie down. She would hafter be prop up in bed and could bairly sit down and she says the first time she was treated with your liniment she felt a change and now she are doing fine and the swelling are all gone and she are able to do all the cooking in 9 days time which her mother had gave her up to die."

Correspondence

Precocious Children.

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL, Jan. 27, p. 277, I note an editorial on precocious children as judged by Professor O'Shea in a recent issue of *Science*. As Professor O'Shea takes the liberty of speaking of my little daughter, Winifred Sackville Stoner, Jr., as an example of a precocious child, I consider it my duty to Winifred as well as to other children to reply to the professor's arguments.

As a great lover of children and an enemy to the present system of public school training, which I believe makes boy and girl automations, I have been earnestly studying child-training for the past ten years. From these observations, I cannot agree with Professor O'Shea that precocious children do not observe people and Nature as much as children untrained in book knowledge. What are good books but store houses of knowledge gathered by great minds after long periods of research on various subjects? Children who are trained to love these best of friends from babyhood will love them through life and thus have friends that will never desert them. Besides, I have noticed, contrary to Professor O'Shea's observations, that children who read books telling of Nature's realms find much more enjoyment in looking at her works than those who see her beauties through untrained eyes.

While taking a party of children through a beautiful wood last summer, I could not help noticing, with pride, how much more enjoyment Winifred got out of her walk than the other children who knew nothing of the leaves, roots, etc., of the various trees. Everything added to one's storehouse of knowledge, even in babyhood, is an open sesame to many pleasures. As a mere baby, Winifred found far more pleasure in walking along the sea shore and talking of the formations of shells than the ordinary child who saw the shells as an ostrich sees them—simply because of their brightness.

I agree with Professor O'Shea in believing that children of 2 years who can read Milton, do not know the sense of what they are reading. In studying the ordinary child trained by modern public school reading methods, I have often found this to be true of children up to the age of 14. Many of these children are also poor spellers. Recently in a test given in the New York high schools out of 1,000 pupils 800 could not spell the simplest words correctly. This is the result of sounding words which have no meaning to a child's ear.

Winifred, I am glad to say, was not taught by this method. She knew how to spell each word and understood its meaning when she used it in reading, the true thought conveyor. She could read when less than 2 years of age, but not Milton. Her first reading book was the simple childish classic, "Peter Rabbit," which the child thoroughly understood and enjoyed.

Despite the belief of many literary people that Winifred is a genius, I do not wish to see her so classed. There is a narrow line between the genius and the fool. Many times the so-called genius is a lopsided creature who shines in one direction, but knows nothing of the great joys derived from a general knowledge of life.

Winifred, who at the age of 9 years can express her thoughts in a number of languages, has published three books and can talk intelligently on mythology, literature, history, geography, art, etc., is only a simple child who loves her playmates and dolls as much as her books. She delights in romping with children of her own age, but if left alone she is never lonely because she has her book-friends or her store of knowledge to carry her to new worlds. She is as full of energy as a race horse, but this energy has been directed into proper channels and does not work havoc as is often the case with children bubbling over with life. Early training through play has made the pathway of knowledge one of joy to Winifred. It has also given her great powers of concentration and observation. With these two seeds implanted early in any child's mind, I believe that child will succeed in some particular line. Every child has a talent. It is the duty of parents to discover this talent and nourish it so that it will bear good fruit.

As Winifred early showed a love of verse, I have striven to develop this love by leading her to the storehouses of great poets. She has never been compelled to study, but seeks knowledge only when she is hungry for it. Therefore her brain is never taxed, for it is only when interest flags that one is injured in thinking.

This child is such a happy, healthy youngster, who finds so much enjoyment in exploring realms very often hated by children, but which she calls her good giants Matematiko and Geografio, that I yearn to see all children finding the paths to knowledge as veritable playgrounds.

For the sake of our children to whom we owe everything (having brought them into the world without their asking) let me plead with parents not to take the advice of a few professors who believe in allowing children to grow as weeds until the sixth or eighth year. "As the twig bendeth so the tree groweth." One cannot begin too early in training the child's mind, which, like wax, is very impressionable. We should teach our baby beautiful thoughts while he is yet in the cradle. Early impressions are lasting. The old man forgets things which he learned in the strength of his manhood, but when the evening of life creeps upon him he goes back to the thoughts of his youth. Then, how grateful will he be for the storehouse of wealth you have given him.

WINIFRED SACKVILLE STONER, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Management of Normal Labor.

To the Editor:—I should feel that I had neglected my duty if I failed to comment on an article on this subject in THE JOURNAL, January 27, p. 274. I am sure, in the main, that the treatment as laid down in this article does not coincide with the advice and teachings of those who are giving obstetrics more than a passing thought. Had the author but referred to any modern text-book on obstetrics, he would have discovered that there had been just as great advancement in this line of medicine as in the other branches and that much of the advice given by him belongs to a period antedating antiseptic surgery. I am surprised that this article should appear in THE JOURNAL of the American Medical Association, and more so that the article was given such a prominent position. It does not seem necessary that I should point out the errors, because they are plain to anyone keeping in touch with modern medical literature; and I am sure, had the article been properly edited, it would not have appeared in our valuable journal.

C. E. PADDOCK, Chicago.

To the Editor:—The article on normal labor, in a recent issue, was very clear and concise, but in one respect it surprised me extremely.

The subject of rubber gloves was omitted. A description of obstetric work without mention of rubber gloves is rather startling. If the author does not approve of gloves, and has other means of preparing the hands, why does he not mention the fact? Or does he take for granted that we all wear gloves, as a matter of course? Evidently not, as he advises us to rupture the membranes with our finger-nails.

Surely boiling water is always to be had. Therefore there can be no easier and quicker way of eliminating infection than using boiled gloves.

A clear understanding on this subject would surely be valuable to the many who were interested and instructed by the mentioned article.

W. C. GAYLER, Saint Louis.

To the Editor:—The general character of THE JOURNAL is so high that it comes to your readers as a shock to find an article in its columns so much behind the times, and so full of errors that it would be a disgrace to a proprietary advertising sheet. Such a shock I experienced in reading the article on "The Management of Normal Labor."

As a guide to the management of labor for the general practitioner it is incomplete, as it omits very important directions and it gives advice quite contrary to all the modern

teaching. Without going into a comprehensive criticism I shall mention only a few things.

Omissions: preparatory enema; satisfactory cleaning of the patient; dressing of patient; external examination of patient; measurement of pelvis; use of gloves.

Objectionable Advice: frequent internal examination; pushing cervix over the head; anointing the perineum and seizing placenta in the vagina; manual removal of placenta in forty-five minutes.

Questionable Advice: use of chloroform instead of ether; interference with cord around neck; delay thirty minutes in cutting cord; routine use of ergot.

The article is not a credit to THE JOURNAL.

C. S. BACON, Chicago.

To the Editor:—The parody on obstetric technic published in THE JOURNAL, Jan. 27, was, no doubt, given to show how badly the thing could be done. It seems to me, however, that the mission of THE JOURNAL would be better fulfilled by giving a clean-cut, modern technic which might serve as an example, rather than one which pulls the average practitioner down to the level of the illiterate midwife.

Is it forgotten: 1. That the vulva is shaved and scrubbed with soap and water, as well as with an antiseptic solution?

2. That rubber gloves and not petrolatum are used in the twentieth century?

3. That the Kelly pad is not yet out of date?

4. That continual manipulations during the second stage are not good practice?

5. That petrolatum on the perineum is about as useful as a snowball in—Panama?

6. That the cut cord should immediately be protected from infection?

7. That the cord should not be pulled on when delivering the placenta?

8. That a prophylactic for ophthalmia neonatorum should be used?

9. That an abdominal binder is needed by the mother? [Our correspondent has overlooked the fact that this is mentioned in the article. Please do not make the article out to be any worse than it is.—ED.]

If I am wrong in believing asepsis to be the sine qua non of obstetric practice, and that the technic given in THE JOURNAL is as poor a specimen as could well be devised by a modern medical journal, then the sooner I know it the better.

ARCHIBALD E. CHACE, M. D., New York.

To the Editor:—There appeared an article in THE JOURNAL describing the conduct of a case of normal labor, which advocated certain procedures to be practiced by the attending physician. Some of them, if the conduct of a case of labor is to be regarded as a surgical procedure, which it most certainly is, are deserving of severe criticism. After sterilization of the hands the following is advocated on part of the physician: "Having lubricated the index and middle-fingers of his right hand with some sterile lubricant, such as petrolatum, the physician inserts these fingers into the vagina and examines the cervix uteri to determine whether it is dilated, whether the pains affect the muscular fibers of the cervix, what part of the child is presenting, if the head is presenting, to determine if possible the position in which it lies, and whether any part of the placenta is attached to the lower segment of the uterus. Incidentally he learns also the condition of the perineum, whether it is rigid, dilatable or relaxed; of the vagina, whether it is moist or dry; of the pelvic walls, whether they are broad or narrow."

Why anybody should advocate the smearing of the examining finger, or fingers, with a mess of petrolatum, which is rendered sterile only with great difficulty and is kept so with even more trouble, is beyond comprehension. It is certainly a reversion to antiquated methods of technic. Surely the fingers of a hand covered with a sterile glove can be readily made insertible by the application of sterile green-