

Patent Medicine Analyses

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Notwithstanding the publicity that has been given to patent medicines for years past a great multitude of people continue to purchase them. W. C. T. U. workers are frequently asked for information regarding different nostrums, therefore some analyses are here given.

Asthma-Tabs, advertised to "kill hay-fever and asthma germs in three days, succeeds after everything else has failed." This "Famous New Discovery" was found upon examination in the chemical laboratory of the American Medical Association to consist essentially of potassium iodid, potassium sulphate, and arsenic trioxid, drugs used for generations by physicians in the treatment of asthma. The advertisements say "it contains no harmful drugs," yet these drugs may be both harmful and dangerous used without the supervision of a careful physician.

Biofood, examined also by the A. M. A., costs \$10 a treatment. The advertisement says, "Don't Diet for Diabetes, Take Biofood." This is most dangerous advice. Biofood is put up as "A," and "B." Investigation showed that Biofood "A" consists essentially of milk, sugar and flavoring, and small amounts of iron, calcium, and manganese salts and phosphate. Biofood "B" showed potassium acetate, salt, Glauber's Salts, and sodium citrate.

Eskip, for diabetes, "consists mainly of magnesium carbonate and starch with a small quantity of an unidentified drug having no medicinal characteristics." (A. M. A.)

El Zair, advertised as "The Elixir of Youth," advertised for both internal and external use, the ingredients of which were said to be found by a traveller in North Africa was found to be Epsom Salts and vinegar perfumed! (A. M. A.)

Evans Cancer Cure, a mixture of a fatty substance, such as lard, and green vitriol. "Five cents worth of green vitriol and a dab of lard will be as likely to cure cancer as the \$100 treatment of Evans Cancer Cure." (A. M. A.)

Rinex Prescription claims to "Kill Colds Quick." "Essentially a mixture of 2 grains aspirin, 1 grain phenacetin, 1/6 of a grain quinine, with a small amount of vegetable extractives and camphor. Rinex Tablets were found to be baking soda, sugar and talc. (A. M. A.)

San-I-Sal, an obesity cure, Epsom Salt, 90 per cent, baking soda, 2 per cent, oil of pine needles, 1 per cent. (A. M. A.)

Miles Heart Treatment. A solution of compounds of iron *** a small amount of phosphate, about 5% glycerine, a substance which may be glycerine or invert sugar. No potent alkaloidal drugs could be detected." (A. M. A.)

Swamp-Root, 8:25 alcohol. "A dilute alcohol-water solution of sugars, flavored, and containing a little laxative and salicylates as the chief ingredients." (Cleveland Board of Health Bulletin, and then forbidden sale in Cleveland.)

Dr. Kennedy's Favorite Remedy. "Sugar, 52.20%; alcohol, 15%; potassium acetate, 2%; sassafras, aloes, and methyl salicylate. Retail price \$1.00. Estimated cost 10 cents. Advertised for diabetes, "for which nothing could be worse." (Cleveland Board of Health.)

Karnak, 18% alcohol, a recent addition to the strongly alcoholic nostrums, showed "ammonium, licorice, laxative drugs, sugar, and small amounts of calcium and magnesium. Does not contain sufficient drugs to prevent use as a beverage." (A. M. A.)

Vita-Pep, 16% alcohol, a little pepsin, rennin, and vitamin B; "made a passable cocktail" says the analyst. (A. M. A.)

Tona-Vin, 18% alcohol, "with a dash of wild cherry and a suspicion of bitters."

Tanlac, examined by the Scientific Laboratories of Des Moines in 1921 showed 17.28% alcohol, sugar, glycerin, and the presence of some bitters, "the only one of the bitters possessing any decided medicinal properties is the cinchona." About 3 grains of cinchona to an 8 oz. bottle of Tanlac. "From this it may be seen" says the analyst "that there is not sufficient medication to prevent its use as a beverage." Lyko, Angelica Bitter Tonic and American Elixir of Bitter Wine, reported by Des Moines as preparations that could be used as "booze."

San-Gri-Na, an obesity cure, advertised as the formula of a French physician. "Essentially sulphur, cream of tartar, precipitated chalk, starch, talc, and the common laxative drug, phenolphthalein." (A. M. A.)

Some of the nostrums reported by the Bureau of Chemistry of the U. S. Government as making false and fraudulent claims are Lydia Pinkham's Compound, Vinol, Doan's Kidney Pills, Texas Wonder, Ferraline, Bick's Nerve Tonic, Foley's Kidney Pills, Porose Pills, De Witt's Kidney and Bladder Pills, To-Ni-Ta, Lafayette Headache Powders, Lafayette Cough Syrup, Hall's Catarrh Medicine, Lung Germine, Pep-Tonic, New Life Remedy, Aspironal, Smith's Buchur Lithia Pills, Vitalo, Miles Nervine,

Greene's Nervura, Piso's Cure, Pulmonal, Shoop's Restorative, Schenck's Pulmonic Syrup, Shoop's Cough Remedy, Tucker's Asthma Cure (has had cocaine in it), William's Pink Pills, Hall's Catarrh Medicine, and numerous bitters and nerve tonics and rheumatism "cures."

Great Britain is a paradise for quacks. A recent nostrum called Yadiil was heavily advertised. Analysis of it showed it to be one part formaldehyd, four parts glycerin, ninety-five parts water and enough garlic to give it a "smell"! It sold at \$20 a gallon; a similar mixture could be made for 36 cents a gallon.

Nuxated Iron has been extensively advertised as what "helped Jess Willard to whip Jack Johnston." Later the advertisements said that Nuxated Iron helped Jack Dempsey whip Jess Willard! In a recent court trial in New York it leaked out that Dempsey never took Nuxated Iron, but was paid \$10,000 for the use of his picture and name in the testimonial. Nuxated Iron consists of Nux Vomica and iron.

Aspirin. The Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association said some years ago, "The indiscriminate use of such drugs as aspirin is detrimental to the public health."

Soothing syrups do not contain morphine now but some of them contain bromids. Bromids are condemned as used in nerve tonics and epilepsy cures. "Ever increasing dullness, heaviness, torpor and stupidity" are results to epileptics resorting much to bromids," says the editor of the Journal of the A. M. A. Jan. 26, 1924. If bromids affect epileptics so injuriously they cannot be very safe for the brains of little babies.

Reolo, "The Health Renewer," is reported to be cane sugar and chalk. (A. M. A.)

Beto is advertised as a diabetes cure. Analysis showed it to be essentially Epsom Salts, talc, and a trace of cinnamon. (A. M. A.)

Mizar, advertised for rheumatism, etc.,—"essentially an ointment, the chief ingredient of which is an extract from capsicum" (red pepper). (A. M. A.) Causes severe skin trouble.

Angostura Bitters are advertised as made from pure rum, 45% alcohol, and are declared to consist "of certain bitter aromatic and carminative substances together with alcohol, etc." Why this preparation is permitted sale when rum without the pleasant additions mentioned is prohibited, is known only to the authorities.

The U. S. Public Health Service says in a report: "Of the many abuses of drug products there is none in which fraud, deception, and a wanton disregard for human health and even life are so clearly evidenced as in connection with the manufacture and sale of cosmetics." Particular warning is given against "the common occurrence of mercuric chlorid or corrosive sublimate in freckle lotions." These remove the skin and sometimes disfigure for life with an appearance of the face as in erysipelas. Some "beauty soaps" also cause the skin to peel and sores may remain.

Patent medicine manufacturers sometimes claim that the drugs used in their preparations require a considerable amount of alcohol as a solvent. But it is possible after the drugs are dissolved to evaporate the alcohol, and make up the drugs in the form of pills, powders or tablets. Peruna was put out in dry as well as wet form some years ago, but does not seem to be so popular "dry" as "wet."

The public should be urged to demand

that secrecy shall be entirely done away with regarding all patent medicines offered for sale as family remedies, and effort should be made to have medicines in "dry" form instead of loaded with alcohol which is injurious to digestion and nerves, and to the white blood cells whose work in sickness is to destroy disease germs.

Note—A. M. A. stands for American Medical Association.

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