(2) That the label should be made to constitute a warranty; and that a false description, whether on the label or main advertisement, should be made an offence; and

(3) That the provisions of the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts should be applied to proprietary medicines.

SKIN DISEASES AND COSMETICS.

BY

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"SKIN troubles immediately relieved and permanently cured." So ran the advertisement in a bath-room of a health resort. There is the secret *in nuce* of all miracle-mongers—the guarantee of cure in any and every case, a talisman made use of by all Cagliostro, thaumaturgists, prophets, and arch-quacks, to employ a Carlylean phrase. Those who saw the *Doctor's Dilemma* will remember the practitioner who had been wholly successful by adding the simple words "cure guaranteed" to his scale of fees.

All this is as old as the hills, and no doubt the same kind of thing will be found inscribed in cuneiform characters on Babylonian bricks and on the ancient monuments of Crete now being brought to light. Indeed, in the case of the latter it is said that a French archaeologist, when he saw the frescoes discovered by Mr. Arthur Evans, exclaimed, "Mais ce sont des parisiennes." Marcel-waving, a mode of hair dressing, was an everyday affair in Minotaurian palaces, just as the three-decker skirt, another recent re-discovery, is depicted on Egyptian monoliths.

In all this question of quackery it is important to bear in mind that in ancient civilizations, side by side with what might be called the regular practitioners, who had devoted time and trouble to the study of the art of medicine, there was a motley crowd of magicians, sorcerers, thaumaturgists, epileptics, fakirs, and camp-followers of divers kinds, who exercised a great influence over the public, just as they do—less picturesquely, it is true—at the present time. Think, for instance, of the pilgrimages to Thessalian Tricæ and to the still more celebrated Peloponnesian shrine of Epidauros. Again, Cos had its sanctuary. In the native tale of Hippocrates the medical man competed with the priests of Asklepios. In the *Mimes* of Herondas, a papyrus first discovered and translated by Mr. Kenyon, of the British Museum, there is a poem devoted to the offering and sacrifice of the women to Asklepios, for Herondas had lived apparently for some time on the island of Cos.¹

In North Africa, Morocco, talismans and amulets are part and parcel of the stock-in-trade of santons for curing and warding off evils. In Mohammedan countries precious stones cure diseases, such as the itch and leprosy. Coral and topaz taken internally are remedies for the latter complaint.²

We may smile at all this, but it must not be forgotten that the same superstitious attitude of mind is simply rampant in the London of the twentieth century. There is no progress really—merely undulatory oscillations about a line. Whether the line be called a norm, be straight, or a circle, like a snake swallowing its own tail, matters not. The fact is that quackery is part and parcel of humanity. Hence the only way of abolishing quackery is to abolish the human race. The French Revolution went some little way in that direction, but even then the ineradicable belief in the impossible was triumphant in the very process of wholesale decapitation.

Now quackery and thaumaturgisms of all kinds are in a ten times stronger position than they were. They are organized on a strong financial basis, and without the huge sums laid out on their advertisement, the newspaper would be in a parlous condition.

Now when we look at the enormous field, which includes morbid cutaneous conditions and cosmetic treatment, is it to be wondered at that there should be on the market so many preparations offered as panaceas for anything between a pimple and a superfluous hair.

Blood mixtures, all of the same kind—namely, an old and trusty friend, pot. iod.—as well as the "I cure fits" remedies (K Br), do indeed bring grist to the mill of the followers of Hippocrates in the shape of iodide and bromide

rashes. And the same may be said of a variety of topical applications for cutaneous ills, which often serve to produce a dermatitis, both extensive and acute.

Hair-washes and hair-dyes are not infrequently productive of similar complications. But what would you, my good sirs? Are not we an educated people? But are we any wiser? I trow not. I think it was Cavour who said to the praters of progress, "Yes, let us admit that humanity progresses," but, he added, "Man remains the same." And whether the individual consult the *palmiste* (whatever *palmiste* with an "e," means—a good many things I should say) of the West End, or an old woman at an area gate, the mental attitude is the same.

As to the hair, the applications are numerous, at any rate have many names. Here again, hair-dyes are very ancient. The East, Egypt, Greece, Rome, know and knew a good many things on this score. The admired Venetian tint of hair was artificial.

One of the lotions recommended for dyeing the hair a fine gold in the time of Leonardo da Vinci contained the following ingredients: Maize juice, decoction of chestnut, saffron, ox bile, swallow droppings, ambergis, calceinèd bears' claws, and oil of tortoise. A charming mixture wherewith to bewitch the male. Oh, the eternal feminine!

Henna forms the basis of many harmless preparations. But there are also two-edged swords in the shape of products made from the everlasting refuse of gasworks. The sun seems to have stored up its radiant energies for aeons in the plants of the Carboniferous epoch in order to beautify certain representatives of the order primates.

In Roman times, for instance, epilation was commonly carried out, and the epilator employed beautiful forceps for that purpose. The same thing obtains in North Africa and the East, to some extent to cut the ground from under the feet of parasites, for the same reason that shaving the pubes is practised by the Arabs.

Nowadays, any young person who has failed at most things takes up electrolysis or purveys depilatory powders, the latter chiefly an arsenical preparation, the well-known *rusma*, but they call the stuff by other names. Then there are complexion preparations, usually known remedies, but always advertised under fancy labels. An old one was made up as follows (Leonardo da Vinci period³) for sunburn and pimples of the face: Asses' milk mixed with the milk of a red goat, asparagus ends, and white lily bulbs. This was rubbed into the face with a piece of bread, whilst the lady recited a short prayer three times in succession.

The make-up employed by Caterina Sforza consisted of two and a half ounces of carbonate of lead and an equal quantity of tartrate of potash, with five ounces of a compound of perchloride of mercury and silver, to which was added tragacanth and Sari powder. This was well mixed and placed in the abdominal cavity of a Pisan pigeon after careful evisceration and cleansing with spring water. The next step was to cook the pigeon in a saucepan, into which was poured water that had been used to make an infusion of adder. The liquid ultimately obtained was to be applied to the face at bedtime.

Now this is the sort of preparation that our contemporary complexion beautifiers ought to advertise. It would be a success, especially among the crowd that believes what it reads in the papers—the web-footed population I think a clever American writer, Mr. George Ade, has dubbed them.

As regards electrical applications, x rays, light, and so forth, I may say I have seen some instances of curious complications brought about. In one case a lady had had, for her chin and lips, x rays, high-frequency currents, various coloured lights, both in the West End area and at health resorts, leading to a kind of condition I had never seen before, and which proved particularly obstinate to rational treatment.

A good many more points could be touched upon. In conclusion, the difficulties in the way of putting an end to quackery are insuperable. Man is not prepared to do without it, and he never will, unless a fresh species of *homo* arises as a sport or on the de Vries principle, and escapes death at the hands of the compact majority.

REFERENCES.

¹ See also Quillard, *Les Mimes d'Herondas*. ² Raynaud, *Étude sur l'hygiène et la médecine au Maroc*, 1902. ³ Dmitry de Merikowsky, *Leonardo da Vinci*.