

The family oracle; or, the art of improving beauty. : Containing instructions to adorn and beautify the ladies, and advice how to make washes, perfumes, essences, liniments, powders, and medicines: together with important and useful receipts, with which every housekeeper ought to be acquainted, and which, from their cheapness, it is in the power of the humblest individual to purchase.

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THE
FAMILY ORACLE;
OR, THE
ART OF IMPROVING BEAUTY.

CONTAINING
INSTRUCTIONS TO ADORN AND BEAUTIFY THE
LADIES, AND ADVICE HOW TO MAKE WASHES,
PERFUMES, ESSENCES, LINIMENTS, POW-
DERS, AND MEDICINES;

TOGETHER WITH
IMPORTANT AND USEFUL RECEIPTS,
WITH WHICH EVERY HOUSEKEEPER OUGHT TO BE ACQUAINTED,
AND WHICH, FROM THEIR CHEAPNESS, IT IS IN THE
POWER OF THE HUMBLEST INDIVIDUAL
TO PURCHASE.

A. J. ...
...

TENTH EDITION.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:
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THE
ART OF IMPROVING QUALITY

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POWER OF THE HONEST INDIVIDUAL
TO PURCHASE

BY
J. W. BROWN

NEW YORK

1850

THE
FAMILY ORACLE;

OR,

THE ART OF PRESERVING BEAUTY.

BEAUTY is a kind of idol, which has had its votaries in every age and climate; its empire is perhaps as ancient as any other, and certainly in many respects much more despotic. As a friend to that sex on whom we depend for all social happiness of life, it behoves us to mention every circumstance which experience evinces to be useful for the preservation of health and beauty. Beauty is said to be the foster mother of love; it indeed mostly produces that passion, but cleanliness preserves it:

“ 'Tis beauty points but neatness guides the dart.”

Of the Skin.

All Deformities of the skin are generally the consequence of a distempered blood thrown upon it. Promoting the urinary discharges, and rectifying the skin by proper washes, is the only way to get rid of such disorders. When therefore any lotion is employed on the skin, the person must always take care that some other *emunctory* may be in readiness to discharge what is lessened by the application of the external medicine: Diuretics are allowed by all to be the best auxiliaries to cosmetics, and it is hardly safe to use the one without the other:—we will first take notice

Of Pimples

This deformity consists in a redness of the face, attended with inflammatory pustules, the cause of which is commonly attributed to an acrid thick blood, that swells and corrodes the small vessels, to clear which, the mass of blood must be sweetened and diluted with proper medicines

For this purpose infuse 4oz. of mustard seed in a quart of white wine, and after three or four days, drink about a wine glass full of it every morning, filling up the bottle every time, as long as the seed gives any strength. Or boil three spoonfuls of mustard seed in a quart of milk, take off the curd, and keep the whey for use. This remedy is an excellent diuretic, and a cordial to the nerves; but it differs from the first in quantity—a half pint must be taken every morning. Among all the lotions and the best to use with the above diuretic, is simple pimpernel water, which is so sovereign a beautifier of the complexion as to deserve a place on every lady's toilet. It is prepared by only infusing half a handful of this herb in a quart of water, letting it stand all night. It may be used a little warmish, but not hot: if not sufficiently powerful to remove the pimples, take camphire rubbed fine in a mortar, put upon it a little and a little at a time, 1oz. of the juice of lemons, when dissolved add 1 pint of white wine. This is a very good lotion for spots and flushings, and may be used with the greatest safety.

To clear a Brown and Tawny Skin.

When it is naturally so, there is no possibility of changing it thoroughly, yet where a healthful habit of body is the natural ground work, those select compositions may prove useful.

Take 1lb. of levigated hartshorn, 2lbs. of rice powder dissolve them in a sufficient quantity of rose-water, and frequently wash the face with the fluid.

Or, take barley water strained through a fine cloth drop into it a few drops of balm of gilead, and shake the

bottle till the balsam is incorporated with the water, which will be known by its turbid appearance. This greatly improves the complexion, if used once a day for a continuance.

To give a Natural Vermilion Tinge to the Cheeks.

To give a tinge to the cheeks, nothing can equal a scarlet or rose-coloured ribband, wetted either with water or brandy, it gives a beautiful bloom that cannot be distinguished from the natural complexion. To avoid a shining face, never use soap, or rub your face with a coarse cloth; clear spring water, or any of the before-mentioned lotions will prove the best washes. A shining red face is like that of a wax baby.

Chopped Lips.

The readiest method to cure simple chops, is, to wash them with barley water, and apply the following mixture of prepared tully and olive oil; of each equal parts.

To remove Hair from the Chin.

Women of sanguine complexions and habit have frequently hair growing on their chin, which is very unseemly. To extirpate, use dulcified spirit of salt, on the part, and rub it gently with a linen cloth: this will effectually kill the roots of the hair, and at the end of a few weeks they will wither and fall away.

Chopped Hands.

Rough and coarse hands are very unhandsome; the following compound will always preserve them smooth: mix 4oz. of fresh hogs-lard that has been well washed in common water, with the yolkes of two new-laid eggs, and a large spoonful of honey, add as much fine oatmeal as to work the whole into a paste.

Restorative Powder for the Teeth.

Acids of every denomination are unfriendly to the teeth, and by frequent use will destroy the enamel: the following mixture not only whitens, but tends to preserve

them. Take peruvian bark 2oz. charcoal $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. armenian ball 1oz. rub them all together in a mortar. If the teeth are wasted, take a piece of wood like a butcher's skewer, made soft at the end, cover it with linen, dip in the above powder, and apply it to the decayed part.

A Cosmetic to produce a fair Neck and Bosom.

Equal parts of chamomile water and white wine, as warm as may be: this for a few weeks will make a considerable change in the skin.

Offensive Breath

(A constant attendant upon the scurvy of the gums, and putrified matter lodged in hollow teeth), the following gargle stands in high esteem. Take 2oz. of cinnamon, 6dr. of cloves, 6oz. of Florentine orrice-root, nutmeg, and mace; bruise them, and macerate them in a quart of spirit of wine, or French brandy, during 48 hours; when used let it be diluted with water.

Or, chew at night a small peice of gum myrrh.

Or, chew every night and morning a clove, or a piece of orrice-root about the size of a bean.

Or, rub the teeth with a piece of rag dipped in the vinegar of spirits.

For destroying Rats.

Cut dried sponge into small pieces, and fry or dip it in honey, it will distend their intestines; the addition of a little oil of rhodium will tempt them to eat it. Bird-lime laid in their haunts will stick to their fur, and cause them to tear themselves to pieces to get rid of it. If a live Rat was caught and well anointed with tar and train oil, and afterwards set at liberty, the offensive smell would cause him to traverse all the holes of his companions with the most distressing anxiety, and cause them all to disappear.

Head-ache.

Cephalic snuff in a general way removes the afflicting pain of the head-ache. 1scr. of Surbut's mineral, $\frac{1}{2}$ dr. of powdered ginger, 1scr. of powdered nutmeg, 3 drops of the oil of rosemary, all mixed, and snuffed up the nose

Ointment for Burns.

This ointment has never yet failed to give relief: yellow bisilican 3oz, turpentine 1½oz.

Corns.

This plaster will always give relief, and frequently remove them: 1oz. of Venice turpentine, the yolkes of two eggs, 2dr. of mercurial plaster, ½oz. of yellow wax; the turpentine and wax must be melted together, and the other ingredients mixed when fluid.

Or, take equal quantities of roasted onion and soft soap; beat them up together, and apply them as a poultice; this application will instantaneously appease the pain of a corn.

For a Cough.

Mix vinegar and treacle in equal quantities, and let a tea-spoonful be taken occasionally when the cough is troublesome. This is a receipt of the late excellent Dr. James, of Carlisle.

Gargle for a Sore Throat.

Take a handful of red sage leaves, simmer them two minutes in a third of a pint of water, strain the liquor off, and when cold, add an equal quantity of vinegar, and sweeten it with honey. Those receipts are best for general purposes, and may be used with perfect safety, and generally with the happiest effects.

Inflamed Eyes

Is a very painful and well-known complaint, arising sometimes from cold, and frequently from a very acrid blood, which stimulates the delicate vessels of the eye, swelling and inflaming them. The following eye-waters are very good to cool sharp hot humours: they may be readily prepared, and will more effectually answer their end, if assisted by the use of diuretics at the same time.

1st. Take calamine levigated ½dr, rose water 2oz.

2nd. Take white vitriol 15gr, rose water 2oz.

With either of these the eyes may be washed at dis-

cretion in all hot defluations ; but when the sight decays from dryness, or a defect of the optic nerve, such things can avail but little.

When a poultice is necessary, you may take half a pint of the decoction of linseed, and as much flower of linseed as is sufficient to make it of a proper consistency. This poultice is preferable to bread and milk for sore eyes, as it will not grow sour or acid.

In corroboration of the above, we prefix a letter to the Editor of the Mechanic's Magazine, page 95, vol. 1.

SIR,

Reading in your miscellany to a friend, a cure for weak eyes, he had recourse to your receipt, and was cured in a short time, though he had previously spent much money without getting relief from the faculty. I hope your readers, who may be in a similar situation, will follow the example.

For the Dysentery, or Cholera Morbus,

Is extracted from the same work, page 95. Take three pennyworth of isinglass, and simmer down in half a pint of water, on a slow fire, till it is all dissolved, and when done, add a little milk and sugar to make it palatable.— Give the patient half a cup full immediately, and a spoonful every hour afterwards. Many, I can assure you, have found it a sovereign remedy and radical cure ; I have never known it to fail in any one instance.—Signed A. R.

Cure for Weak Eyes.

Take a small lump of white copperas, say about the size of a pea, put it in a small phial, holding about 2oz. of water, carry this in the pocket, and occasionally taking out the cork, turn the phial upon the finger's end, and thus bathe the eyes. This will positively effect a real cure in a short time.

To restore the Voice and remove Hoarseness

Many causes may contribute to this defect, particularly severe colds, breathing an air too full of dust, &c. too much speaking or singing, or being too suddenly exposed to the air on quitting convivial meetings, and entertainments of jollity. To remove this defect, drink frequently of barley and liquorice water, eat black currant jelly, and gargle the mouth twice or thrice every morning with the syrup of hedge mustard diluted in a glass of milk-warm water.

It is certainly very mortifying to a lady to have a masculine voice, and yet it is a very frequent circumstance. As a means of contracting the larynx, the extra wideness of which is the cause, you must drink nothing hot: frequently drink lemonade water acidulated with verjuice, oranges, &c. and gargle the throat every morning with equal quantities of verjuice and water.

To Change the colour of Grey or Red or Sandy Hair dark.

This is perhaps as easy, cheap, and efficacious a method of changing the colour of hair as any ever invented, and has been often advertised, and sold for 10s. a pint.

To 2oz. of black lead, finely powdered, add 1oz. of ebony shavings, boil them in a quart of clear water till reduced to a pint, filter the decoction, add a little bergamot or any other perfume, and bottle the liquid for use; to use it, fix a small sponge on the upper part of the comb, and dipping it in the preparation, the hair will thus become more effectually wet and tinged than by the comb. It must be observed, that as the hair does not shoot from the top but from the root, frequent application is necessary, or the hair may in time appear in two colours.

For the Gravel.

Dissolve 3dr. of prepared natron in a quart of cold soft water, and take half this quantity in the course of the day; continue this medicine for a few days and that painful

complaint will be dissolved. It may be taken at any hour, but it is best after a meal.

For Shortness of Breath.

Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. of fine powdered senna, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of flour of brimstone, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. powdered ginger, in 4oz. of clarified honey. Take the bigness of a nutmeg every night and morning for five days successively, afterwards once a week for some time, and finally once a fortnight.

Fine Ginger Cakes for Cold Weather.

Break three eggs in a basin, beat them well, and add $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of cream, which must also be beat with them, and the whole put into a sauce pan over the fire, to be stirred till it gets warm, then add 1lb. sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of loaf sugar, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of ginger, both powdered, carefully stirring the whole over a slow fire, just to melt all the butter, pour it on 2lb. of fine flour, and form it all into a good paste, roll it or break it into pieces, as you think proper, and bake it.

Bugs.

The spirit of tar is so powerful a poison to these nightly visitors, that as soon as it comes in contact with one, it instantly dies. It should be applied by means of a small painting brush to the joints and crevices or cracks in the bedstead, and also their places of retreat in the wainscot or wall. So noxious is the smell of this spirit to these vermin, that they desert the bed where it has been used. The price of the tar is 9d. per quart. The refined spirit of tar, which is less odoriferous, is 2s. per pint. Both being volatile, they should not be used by candle-light. The essence of bergamot is also a powerful poison to bugs.

Tooth Powder.

Burn hazel nuts in the fire till the flame is gone and they are red hot, take them out, throw away the shell, and crush the kernel, which will then form an exceeding

fine charcoal tooth powder, far superior to that sold in the shops.

To sweeten Meat, Fish, &c. that is tainted.

When meat, fish, &c. from intense heat or long keeping are likely to pass into a state of corruption, a simple and pure mode of keeping them sound and healthful, is, by putting a few pieces of charcoal, each the size of an egg, into the pot or sauce-pan wherein the meat or fish is to be boiled. Among others an experiment of this kind was tried upon a Turbot, which appeared to be too far gone to be eatable; the cook, as advised, put four pieces of charcoal under the strainer in the fish-kettle, after boiling the proper time, the Turbot came to the table perfectly sweet and firm.

To kill Cockroaches.

Give them the root of black hellibore which grows in marshes, and may be had from country people; strew them over the floor at night, and next morning you will find all the family of cockroaches dead or dying from having eaten of it, which they will do with much avidity.

To make Ginger Beer.

1½oz. of well bruised ginger, 1oz. of cream of tartar, 1lb. of white sugar, put these ingredients into an earthen vessel and pour upon them a gallon of boiling water, when cold add a table-spoonful of yeast, and let the whole stand till next morning, then scum and bottle it; keep it three days in a cool place, it will then be fit for use.

To make Boots and Shoes Waterproof.

Mix equal parts of mutton fat, bee's wax, and sweet oil together, in a small gallipot, and heat them over the fire till melted; then, after the mixture has cooled a little, apply it to the shoes plentifully, particularly about the welt and seams, and that will render them entirely waterproof.

Bites of Venomous Reptiles.

M. le Dr. Record, sen. discovered, during a long residence in America, what he considers a sure mode of preventing mischief from such bites. It is sufficient, he says, to pour a few drops of tincture of cantharides on the wound, to cause a redness and vesication; not only is the poison rendered harmless, but the stings of the reptiles are removed with the epidermis that the blister raises.

Harness Maker's Jet

Take 1dr. of indigo, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of isinglass, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of soft soap, 4oz. glue, one pennyworth of logwood raspings, 1 quart of vinegar, and a small quantity of green vitriol, boil the whole together over a slow fire till reduced to a pint; a small quantity is then to be taken on a clean sponge, and thinly applied to harness, boots, shoes, taking care they are previously well brushed. This composition saves a world of trouble to coachmen and grooms.

To give a fine colour to Mahogany

Use the following liquid:—Into a pint of cold drawn linseed oil put four pennyworth of alkanet root, and two-pennyworth of rose-pink, in an earthen vessel; let it remain all night, then stirring well rub some of it all over the tables with a linen rag, when it has lain some time, rub it with linen cloths.

To make the Best Black Ink.

Take 4oz. of the best blue galls of Aleppo, which break in a mortar, but not too small. Put to them a quart of clear rain or river water in a jar, which stir every day for a month, keeping it in a warm situation. Then take an ounce of green copperas (or less if good) to strike the colour, and after one day, about an ounce of gum arabic, to which may be added a little clear alum, and it will be fit for use. A greater quantity of ingredients will make more than a proportionate quantity of ink.

N. B. To keep it from moulding, put in a little salt ; and a glass of brandy or spirits, to keep it from freezing.

To make Red Ink.

Take three pints of stale beer (rather than vinegar) and four ounces of ground Brazil wood ; simmer them together for ten or fifteen minutes ; then put in four oz. of Roach alum ; and these are to simmer together for five or ten minutes, till by putting a slip of clear white paper, you perceive the colour to be strong enough ; after straining it through a flannel or rag, add one ounce of gum arabic ; then bottle it up, and stop it down till used.

To make Flannels keep their colour and not shrink.

Put them into a pail, and pour boiling water on, letting them lie till cold, the first time of washing.

To make cheap Shoe Blacking.

Take 4oz. of ivory black, 3oz. of the coarsest sugar, a table spoonful of sweet oil, and a pint of small beer, with half a spoonful of oil of vitriol ; mix them gradually cold.

To clean Tin Covers.

Get the finest whitening, which is only sold in large cakes, the small being mixed with sand ; mix a little of it, powdered with the least drop of sweet oil, and rub well and wipe clean, then dust some dry whitening in a muslin bag over, and rub bright with dry leather. The last is to prevent rust.

To take Ink out of Mahogany.

Dilute half a tea-spoonful of oil of vitriol with a large spoonful of water, and touch the part with a feather ; watch it, for if it stays too long it will leave a white mark. It is therefore better to rub it quick, and repeat it if not quite removed.

To Make Wash-Balls.

Shave thin two pounds of new white soap into a tea-cup full of rose water; then pour as much boiling water on as will soften it; put into a brass pan, a pint of sweet oil, four penny-worth of oil of almonds, half a pound of spermaceti, and set all over the fire till dissolved; then add the soap, and half an ounce of camphor, that has first been reduced to powder, by rubbing it in a mortar with a few drops of spirit of wine, or lavender water, or any other scent; boil ten minutes, then pour it into a basin, and stir it till it is quite thick enough to roll up into hard balls, which must then be done as soon as possible. If essence is used, stir it in quick after it is taken off the fire, that the flavour may not fly off.

To clean Cast Iron and Black Hearths.

Mix black-lead and whites of eggs well beaten together; dip a painter's brush, and wet all over, then rub it bright with a hard brush.

To take the Black off the Bright Bars of Polished Stoves in a few minutes.

Rub them well with some of the following mixture on a bit of broad cloth:—Take soft soap mixed to a good consistence with emery.

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