

MONTHLY COLUMN FOR SOAP, PERFUMERY & COSMETICS

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Nauseating Nostalgia

I have had a very busy time in the bookshops again, and as the dust has barely had time to settle from the latest additions to my library, I am pleased to tell you that I have found the cure for obesity. I am not going to continue on from my topic of last month, but I felt sure that you would like to know that the answer is “*Shadforth’s Ox-Gall Obesity Soap – for excessive stoutness and corpulence*”.

This has to be my favourite advertisement of all time and consists of two circles. In the left hand circle is a picture of a fat lady sitting in her bath, who is saying “*Too fat! I will try Shadforth reducing soap. I cannot bear this discomfort any longer. I long to be as other women are. (On the bath) There is so much of me in the bath there is no room for any water*”

OBESITY

Excessive Stoutness & Corpulence

TOO FAT!
I WILL TRY THIS
SHADFORTH REDUCING SOAP



I CANNOT BEAR
THIS DISCOMFORT
ANY LONGER

I LONG TO BE
AS OTHER
WOMEN
ARE.

THERE IS SO MUCH
OF ME IN THE BATH
THERE IS NO ROOM
FOR ANY WATER.

GRACEFULLY SLIM
THIS SHADFORTH
REDUCING SOAP IS MARVELLOUS



TO THINK WHAT
I WAS AND
WHAT I AM NOW.

SO SIMPLE
& CERTAIN
IN ITS
USE.

I SHALL TAKE A
CAKE OF THIS
SOAP WITH ME
WHEREVER I GO.

Shadforth's Ox-Gall Obesity Soap

(PRESCRIPTION 986.)
Composed of Pure Soap and Purified Ox-Gall.

Used for bath massage purposes in obesity, greasy or oily skins, and fatty complexion. Rub thoroughly to form a lather and wash out with warm water. Massage well. The purest soap known.
Price 1s. 3d. per tablet.

This soap is one of the constituents of
The Shadforth "Double-Duplex" Treatment
(No. 575/DD) For Obesity.

In the right hand circle “*Gracefully slim this Shadforth reducing soap is marvellous. To think what I was – and what I am now. So simple & certain in its use. (On the bath) I shall take a cake of this soap with me wherever I go*”.

The good news is that it only costs 1s 3d a bar and it is also good for oily skin. The bad news is that the catalogue is dated 1938.

Soap captured my imagination and so I decided to look back in time to see what other cleansing preparations might have been available. Montgomery Ward & Co., who were based in Chicago, Illinois had a good choice in their catalogue of 1895 for Spring and Summer.

My first choice would be for Geyserite Soap – *“nature’s own medicinal soap; a product of Geyser action, holding in solution potash, soda lime, iron, magnesia and sulphur, which, chemically combined with a pure vegetable oil compound, forms a pure, cleansing and healing toilet soap; heals cuts, burns, bruises, eczema and eruptions of the skin: try Geyserite for the complexion”*

I would probably alternate this with Crown Princess Eu-ca-lyp-tus Soap (for which they kindly spelt out the syllables) *“for the complexion, from pure vegetable oils, contains no perfume except oil of Eu-ca-lyp-tus which is the principal ingredient: it whitens the skin and leaves it fresh and youthful in appearance; for scalp, hair, skin diseases, pimples, blackheads, brown spots, freckles, sunburn and tan it has no equal”*.

It was hard to make a choice, with names like “T’m All Right” milled toilet soap (I bet the marketing man was hard-pressed to think that one up) and “El Soudan” Palm soap, which boasted the finest selected African Palm Oil. Other ingredients of the time included ‘Glycerine, Honey and Oatmeal’ (which would appeal today), ‘Pure Cream’, ‘Bay Rum and Glycerine’, and ‘Lana oil, Buttermilk and Glycerine’. I am embarrassed to admit that I do not have a clue as to what Lana oil might be.

Among the offerings were glycerine soaps, including our own Pear’s English soap, which was described as *“unexcelled for the toilet and bath: makes a copious lather, is very emollient and produces a smooth skin”*.

Other soaps included: ‘Glycerine Healing Tar’, which was *“made especially for farmers, mechanics and people doing rough work”* (sounds like one for us consultants), ‘Carbolic, Sulphur and Tar’ *for the complexion and diseases of the skin*. (Notice how they spelled sulphur the proper way with a “ph”!)

In those days, of course, there were no surfactants, so people had to use soap or a dry shampoo. I found some excellent advice in Jane Gordon’s book “Technique for Beauty”, published in 1940. *As a general rule, a shampoo is necessary every to or three weeks in the country, and every week, ten days, or two weeks in town* (well that’s decisive). *In my opinion, pure Castile soap makes the best shampoo. You can get this soap in long bars for approximately a shilling a bar. The best way to make the shampoo is as follows: flake off two ounces of soap, place in two pints of water, bring to the boil, and strain the soapy water through coarse muslin.*

After two washes and five rinsings you were advised to use a vinegar rinse to remove any last traces of soap, especially if the hair is inclined to be greasy. *”The disadvantage of this rinse is that it leaves the hair smelling rather unpleasant; but it makes the hair much easier to set, and can be used as a setting potion”*. So basically, after hours of hard work grinding up soap, boiling it, straining it and umpteen stages of cleansing your precious locks you ended up smelling like a chip shop.

She also recommended lemon juice (half a lemon to 2 pints water), which again removed any last vestiges of soap, but it *left the hair a little harsh and stiff*. An egg rinse was made by mixing the yolk of one fresh egg in a cupful of water, rubbing it in thoroughly and then followed by several more rinses. *This rinse tends to brighten the hair, and prevents light hair from going mousy or dark*.

The traditional use of chamomile is mentioned, where a handful thrown into a pint of boiling water, cooled and strained through muslin was used as a last rinse. *This is excellent for fair hair, and can be used as a colour tonic to keep hair a light shade*.

Finally, *“...the hair should be dried with large coarse hand-towels, and finished off by brushing with a clean brush if possible in sunlight*.

It is hardly surprising that hair tended to thin or fall out. However, all was not lost, and there were numerous products to replace falling hair, which from the descriptions have not been surpassed even by today’s modern technology.

The second of this month’s tips relates to a product called “Capsuloids” (an ingested product in a pear-shaped gelatin capsule sold for 2s 3d for 36 capsules). The claims ran as follows: *“Capsuloids have that particular and remarkable effect on the hair through the medium of the blood, which is so well and widely known. Capsuloids not only cause the death of those harmful germs which we have proved to be the cause of falling out and prematurely grey hair, but they restore the injured growing cells of the hair roots, and nourish them, and cause them to multiply so that the roots become firm and grow rapidly, producing thick and luxuriant hair, and where there has been premature greyness, it also cured. Recent scientific investigation has definitely proved this, and has demonstrated that hair cannot be made to grow by using external preparations”*.

An exposé by the British Medical Association in a book called “Secret Remedies – what they cost and what they contain” printed in 1909 gave an analysis, which showed the product to be haemoglobin (1.97 grain), Olive oil/oleic acid (0.54 grain), Balsam of Peru and purified storax (0.17 grain) per capsule. Cost of 36 capsules was estimated by the BMA to be 1d, which is a

marketing man's dream with a 27 times 'mark up'!

No doubt having achieved this new luxuriant head of hair you would want to have one of the finest implements to look after it, and what could be better than Dr. Scott's Electric Hair Brush of 1883. This was not only in daily use by the Queen, but also by Prince Albert and the Princess of Wales. If that was not enough, the Pall Mall Electric Association of London (the manufacturers) claimed that it would restore the hair, prevent baldness, cure headaches in five minutes and also cure neuralgia in the same period of time. A useful and reassuring piece of news was that it had bristles and not wires, which meant that it would be of no use on your suede Hush Puppies. The presence of a compass in the box is not immediately apparent.