

CHAPTER XXII.

This exposure of Peruna came out in Physical Culture by Bernarr Macfadden. This is but a sample of how this druggery is carried on. May this be the means of saving some druggist from becoming a murderer through Dr. Hartman.

PERUNA, THE GREAT CURE-ALL.

(By G. F. O'Brien, a former traveling agent of the Peruna Drug Manufacturing Company.)

The attention of temperance reformers of the country is called to the startling fact that the stimulating qualities of nearly all patent medicines come from the alcohol they contain. Many of them contain more alcohol than does whiskey. The following article, sent me by a former employee of the Peruna Drug Co. of Columbus, Ohio, gives some very startling information about the ingredients of Peruna and the business methods of the company. An investigation has been made as far as possible to verify the truth of the statements in this article, and a chemical analysis of Peruna has been made for the editor by a qualified chemist to substantiate the statements made as to the ingredients of Peruna. If any of these statements are untrue I would be pleased to know it.—BERNARR MACFADDEN.

Some one has said that a sucker is born every day. After you have read this article you will say that a sucker is born every second. Everybody remembers the great showman, P. T. Barnum, and the wonderful success he achieved. His maxim was that the "American public liked to be humbugged." This phrase is true in more senses than one, and no one knows it better than the man who spends the bulk of Dr. Hartman's money to push the sales of Peruna.

Abraham Lincoln once said that "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but cannot fool all of the people all of the time." This pertains to Peruna as well as to the defunct Turf Exchange, or any other gigantic fake, for when any body of men can mix a compound of deodorized spirits, cubebs, water, and color the mixture with burned sugar and give it a crazy name having no more meaning than the mixture has virtue, and sell it to you or anybody else for a dollar a bottle, it is a foregone conclusion that the bottom will drop out of it some day and as quickly as it did with the sale of "Vinegar Bitters."

No one who can read a newspaper can help coming across some testimonial proclaiming the wonderful cures performed by this dope liquid. You, who cannot see the working of the machinery of a patent medicine

company's office, think that everything you see is true. Well, it isn't. Not by a city block. Of course, the testimonial has the signature of the person whom the Peruna Company says was cured, but should they allow you to see the supposed letter you will usually see that the signature and the writing of the testimonial are not written in the same hand. I say this advisedly, for I know, as I have secured hundreds of such testimonials, and in no case did the cured (?) write a word other than his signature. I was ordered to make the testimonial as strong as I could, and by the promise of giving the writers a dozen of their photographs they in most cases signed, saying:

"I suppose it is all right."

The first testimonial I wrote for Peruna was secured from a farmer in Minnesota, in 1894. He said that he and his wife were cured of "catarrh." Well, the layout I saw at his barn was a sight for sore eyes. I counted seventy-four empty Peruna bottles, and wondered how on earth the family was still alive. The druggist of whom the farmer bought his Peruna laughed when I showed him my testimonial, and said that he never had catarrh—had only a bad thirst every hour or so.

In 1895 I learned that a prominent man in Iowa was a strong advocate of Peruna, and as the sale of Peruna was small in that city I at once decided to secure the endorsement of him and called on the leading druggist and learned that the party had catarrh.

I then returned to my hotel and wrote a strong testimonial and gave my customary song and dance to the gentleman in question about his prestige in the county, and told him that as he was a leading business man in the city it was his duty to sing the praises of an article that pleased his taste. He then stated that I could sign his name providing it was not to a mortgage on his blacksmith shop. So, after some strong talk, he affixed his name and gave me his photo, and I went on my way rejoicing.

Well, six months later the poor man died. The Peruna Company continued to publish his testimonial several years afterwards, until I called their attention to the fact.

Peruna is sold in carloads at \$4,200.00 a car.

Now the company buy its "spirits" (alcohol) by the carload from Peoria, Ill. They get their cubebs in "barrelfuls," and their water is somewhat inexpensive. An ounce of caramel or burned sugar will color a case of Peruna. So here is a close estimate: Actual cost of the liquid, five cents; bottle, three cents; label and wrapper, half a cent. This shows a total of nine cents a bottle. Twelve bottles cost a dollar and eight cents. Then add the cost of the box and the twelve excelsior wrappers, and this makes a case of "Peruna" cost, say, a dollar and a quarter. This sold for seven dollars a case, in car lots of 600 cases to the car, or a total of \$4,200.00. Deduct \$750.00, the actual cost of material, and you have \$3,450.00 profit on each car. However, as all of the expenses come out of this, we cannot say that the company clears \$3,450.00 on every car, for they have about 150 girls in the various departments to pay.

In all of the testimonials published you will see at the end of the ad. several lines stating that "if you don't get relief at once write to Dr. Hartman, and he will give you his valuable advice gratis."

Well, you send in your diagnosis, and your letter goes to an employee. It is opened very carefully so that no stamps may go in the waste basket. Then your penmanship is ridiculed, or praised, and then your treatment is dictated to one of the young lady stenographers. It will read like this:

"My Dear Sir:—I have your esteemed favor, and after careful study of your symptoms as given in your letter I find that you have a very bad case of catarrh of the stomach. You say that you have followed the directions as given on the bottle and failed to get relief. Well, this is singular. Yours is the first letter we have received reading like this, and we feel satisfied that you are wrong. However, try a larger dose before meals and upon retiring, and you will receive a permanent cure.

Yours respectfully, DR. S. B. HARTMAN."

Wouldn't that jar you? Right here is where the fake comes in. You are led to believe that you get Dr. Hartman's advice, and you get merely a typewritten letter from his employee who, by the way, spends a great deal of his time in some health resort in Arizona for the same trouble for which you asked a remedy—"stomach trouble." If Peruna will cure you, why on earth doesn't this man cure himself, and save car fare to Arizona?

The same question might be asked of another employee, who in all probability will go to Los Angeles the coming fall for a milder climate. Everybody in Columbus who knows him knows that he has very weak lungs. Now, if his Peruna is so good for curing you of catarrh of the lungs, why in the name of all common sense doesn't he cure himself? The simple fact is that he has no faith in it, nor has anyone else in Columbus who understands the game.

Nearly everyone knows how far an Indian will go to get a bottle of "spirits." In Indian Territory the marshal has refused to allow Peruna to be sold or given away to anyone inside of the boundary lines of the Territory. How is Peruna smuggled in? Peruna is sold there just the same, only it is kept under the counter out of sight, and when an Indian calls for "Peruna" the druggist forces him to buy some article like a prayerbook, or face bleach, or Pink Pills. Then he gives the Indian the Peruna, charging full price for both articles. When an order for a car-load comes from St. Louis, Kansas City or Wichita, it specifies at least 100 plain boxes, meaning that the words "Peruna, the Great Tonic," are to be left off. By leaving the boxes plain this stuff goes by the inspectors at points in the Territory, and thus the laws of our country are trampled under foot by the very people who would be the nation's benefactors, and who are the first to cry "fraud, counterfeiter, imitator," against any shrewd doctor who wants to work the same money-making game.

Monterey, Mexico, is at present being christened, I believe, with this bottled water, spirits, cubebs and burnt sugar, which will inoculate the

natives in this new field with an article that will produce that "funny feeling," and cause more than one Spanish descendant to bite the dust.

Do you suppose that a temperance woman knew what she was doing when she recommended the article that is barred out of Indian Territory? If some squaw did this we could overlook it. Ask Carrie Nation what she thinks of Peruna.

I have often wondered if all of those public men would go on the stand and take their oath that the testimonials they signed represented the whole truth. What do you think of a man who will say that he was cured of anything by drinking water, spirits, cubebs and burned sugar?

The Owl Drug Company made a statement that Peruna contained whiskey. The drug company meant well in exposing the harm that lies in it, but it has not even the credit of containing any whiskey, for whiskey costs money, and one glass of whiskey costs more than the whole bottle of Peruna.

But Peruna has this merit, that the "spirits" used are 90 proof, and Peruna as it is sold contains about 26 per cent. alcohol—more than enough to make alcohol slaves of the women and children who make use of it, and sufficient to produce a good noisy drunk; one to be remembered long by any man.

I give place in this book to some of the poetry written on the crusade. 'Tis significant that a chivalrous age is a poetic one. Poetry and song is the language of Love Divine and human.