

The following are extracts from recipes. What would these mixtures be used for?

1. Fill a pint bottle with garlic; add as much brandy as possible, and let it stand for 3-4 days.
2. Mix black tea, glycerine, Spanish flies, rum, and boiling water. Stand for 2-3 days.
3. Chop up a seagull, and boil it in water to make a strong broth.
4. Mix together stale urine and salt.
5. Make sheep shanks into a powder, and infuse them in white wine.

Answers: curing asthma / cleaning oil paintings / removing freckles / dyeing the hair / curing a child's worms

What were the following techniques supposed to achieve?

6. Apply several drops of pigeon's blood to the patient's eye.
7. Give the patient a broth made of hooves, ox dung, wolf's dung or powdered wolf's guts.
8. Apply a mixture of cobwebs and salt; alternatively, apply ashes and burnt linen; alternatively, hang a dried toad around the neck.
9. Cover the patient entirely with wet cloths dipped in vinegar; alternatively, fry some of the patient's blood and have the patient snort it; alternatively, pulverise spiders and have the patient snort the mixture; alternatively, immerse the genitals in cold water.
10. Have a dog lie on the patient's feet.

Answers: Curing smallpox / staunching bleeding / curing gout / curing nose-bleeds / curing a stomach-ache

Answers:

1. *Curing worms (garlic still gets used as a remedy for worms)*
2. *Dyeing hair (black tea still gets used as a hair dye)*
3. *Curing asthma*
4. *Cleaning oil paintings (widely recommended and apparently effective!)*
5. *Removing freckles*
6. *Curing smallpox (smallpox often causes ocular complaints)*
7. *Curing a stomach-ache*
8. *Staunching bleeding (first two options would be somewhat efficacious)*
9. *Curing nose-bleeds (I recommend none of these)*
10. *Curing gout (gout affects feet - this supposedly transfers it to the unfortunate dog!)*

I didn't record my sources for these (sorry!). So far as I can remember, I took them from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century housewives' manuals.