

Why do we not notice change until it has happened and, in most cases, happened a considerable length of time ago? I suppose it might be because it kind of sneaks up on us. Maybe, it is a little like how my dark hair took on a salt and pepper look and then just salt nearly without my realizing it. But, it does not have to be anything as arbitrary as one's own appearance.

What made me think of this was a sliver in Runo's knuckle. I took it out the old-fashioned way—probably not deemed safe or acceptable these days. I sterilized (if, in fact, it actually sterilizes) my instrument by lighting a kitchen match and passing the sharp business end of a sewing needle through the flame. Then, I used the needle to remove the sliver.

It bled a little, and he rubbed in some "Triple Antibiotic Ointment" that contained bacitracin zinc, neomycin sulfate, and polymyxin B sulfate. What these do I have no idea, but we are so used to applying some sort of medicine to a cut or scratch that we seem to automatically assume we are better for it.

That led my thoughts to the past and to some of the commercial products we used that don't seem to be around any more, and one is quite sure that it is fortunate that some of them have disappeared.

I remember being fascinated by Mecurochrome. This little glass bottle of reddish liquid was commonly applied to scratches, scrapes, or small wounds. Barefoot and outside all summer long, we had plenty of little injuries brought about by the careless and wild lives we led. Mecurochrome did not hurt when it was applied. It was the applicator that fascinated me. Each bottle had a tiny glass rod attached to the screw-on top. This clear glass rod had a blunt, rounded tip. One dipped the applicator into the solution in the bottle and then wiped it across the injury.

Sometimes, though, it wasn't merurochrome that was swiped across the injured finger or elbow. When the little bottle contained an orangey, paler liquid I wasn't as happy to stick out my elbow or hold up an injured finger. When it was merthiolate in the bottle, the little glass applicator spread pain. Merthiolate stung! I believe it was alcohol based. Now, looking at the contents listed for these substances, it looks to me like both were rather toxic. But, I don't suppose we ever got enough to do us any harm.

Sometimes, instead of toothpaste, tooth powder, or plain old baking soda, we brushed our teeth with what we liked best, a bright

red liquid called Teel. I can't find a picture of that product or much information about it, but I don't suppose there was anything positive to recommend it except its delightful cinnamony flavor and bright color. And, the bottle. The Teel bottle was broad at the bottom and then swirled up attractively to a narrow top. We sprinkled it on our toothbrushes and brushed, enjoying the flavor. We didn't have it very often. Pepsodent, a traditional toothpaste, was nearly as desirable in our view as Teel. Pepsodent tasted like root beer barrel candy.

The attributes of these commercial products from years gone by were probably not nearly as positive as we thought. But, still, thinking about them brings back a bit of nostalgia for those days. And, then, there were laundry products, cold remedies, cleaning aids, pest deterrents—many containing ingredients we know enough about to avoid today. But, which of the many newer products we now think are safe and effective may have other qualities of which we are are unaware? I suppose the next generation will find out.