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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, August 15, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Cosmetics and the Law." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U.S.D.A.

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We women--and our husbands, sons and daughters also--buy cosmetics occasionally at least. We women use cold creams, lotions and powders, lipsticks, rouge, depilatorils, and so on. Our husbands use shaving creams, after-shaving powders and lotions, and certain skin ointments. But most of us don't realize what a huge amount of these cosmetics we buy here in the United States. I haven't the exact statistics for last year, but I can give you an idea from a recent report of the year 1929 from the Department of Commerce. In 1929 the figures show that we spent more than \$274,000,000 on cosmetics--more than a quarter of a billion on face creams, powders and so on. And this figure doesn't include money spent for special services, such as beauty parlor treatments. Figuring averages this means \$50 spent by every American for cosmetics in 1927.

The way the toilet preparation business has grown in recent years is amazing. The total value quoted for 1929 represented an increase of \$42,000,000 over the 1927 figure.

Perhaps you'd like to know just how that money went. Well, one-sixth of this amount went for face powders and rouges; one-sixth for creams; one-sixth for perfumes, toilet water, talc, toilet powders; one-sixth for dentifrices; one-sixth for shampoos and hair dyes; the remainder for other toilet preparations and treatments.

In 1930 the Associated Press announced that "American women went in heavy for powders last year." They bought four thousand tons of powders alone and enough lipstick to reach from Chicago to Los Angeles by way of San Francisco." That isn't the whole story either. We Americans also bought more than 62,000 tons of cleansing creams, about 20,000 of skin lotions, over 19,000 tons of cleansing soap, 17,000 tons of nourishing cream, nearly 90,000 tons of foundation cream and more than 6,500 tons of bath powders. Rouge alone went up to 2,500 tons.

I've quoted all these figures just to show you what an immense amount of cosmetics we use in this country. Most of them are harmless and most are useful. But every now and then you hear of someone who has suffered by using a poisonous beauty preparation. Let me tell you one story just by way of illustration. A woman in Pennsylvania bought a bottle of a well-known preparation advertised as a depilatory or hair remover. She bought it in good faith, having no reason to suppose it was injurious, and she applied some of it under her arms. It removed the hair not only from the place where she applied it, but it didn't stop there. It also removed the hair from her head. This preparation not only made her tem-

porarily bald but also very ill, because it contained thallium acetate, a deadly poison. A number of other women bought the same preparation and suffered similar misfortunes.

You are probably asking the same question I did when I first heard this story. "Why didn't the government take this dangerous hair-remover from the market or fine-- or jail-- the manufacturer? Haven't we a Food and Drug Administration to protect us in such cases?"

Yes, we have a Food and Drug Administration, but its powers are limited under the present law. According to law, cosmetics do not come under the head of either food or drugs. Hence the federal government at present has no control over the manufacture or sale of all the great numbers of toilet preparations which we buy every year. What is more, the Food and Drug Act, as it now stands, does not regulate advertising of any preparation--foods, drugs or cosmetics. It requires that the label on the package or container should state the truth, but it doesn't require that radio or printed advertising be truthful. No law now fully protects you against advertisers whose statements are incorrect.

But the Government has drafted a new national pure food and drug bill. If Congress passes this bill, it will take the place of the present food and drugs act. The new bill contains definite provisions about cosmetics and advertising. The bill includes cosmetics within the definition of drugs. Consequently, if the bill passes, a manufacturer of cosmetics will be required to label his cosmetics honestly and to ADVERTISE them honestly and for what they are. Under the bill now before Congress, cosmetics containing chemicals potentially injurious to health would not be permitted sale under ANY kind of label. If this new food and drugs act passes, a manufacturer will be held responsible for any untruths or misleading statements made in collateral advertising of cosmetics as well as foods and drugs. Whether or not the law will pass will depend on the public's demand for it.

Tomorrow: "Care of Milk in Summer."

