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FOR A COLD OR THE FLU, TAKE...

A Paper for
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The first five items concerning colds and/or the flu were collected from my mother-in-law, Mrs. Annie Bell Fine Kelly, a 77 year-old white woman, born in Cullman, Alabama November 13, 1907. She considers herself from family history to be Irish and Jewish ancestry--she considers Judaism to be a nationality just as much as she considers those born and reared in other nations such as Germany, France, or, in her case, Ireland as ancestral country. She is and has been all her life a practicing Methodist. She and her surviving sisters tell a family story as to how they happen to be part Jewish.

No one is sure of dates, but the story goes that a man with the surname Feinstein emigrated from Germany to Ireland on account of religious persecution, married and raised a family. Immigrating to the United States occurred in stages. First, an older son of this Feinstein migrated to these shores, and lost touch with his family. Later on, Feinstein himself arrived, seeking work, with the intention of bringing over the rest of the family when he was settled. He settled in Cullman, Alabama, and there he found his lost elder son, who had through some fluke also settled there. Later on he brought the rest of his family over from Ireland, including the young boy, Willie, who grew up, married and raised a family. Annie Belle was Willie Fine's daughter. At some point the 'Stein' was dropped from the family name, and the spelling of 'Fein' changed to 'Fine', probably in order to blend better with the new country they had chosen.

Evidently there were few, if any, other Jews in Cullman, and the dominant church was Methodist. Therefore much, if not all, of the Jewish religious influence has been lost. Annie Bell does not consider herself to be of German extraction at all, even though the family history, as told by herself and her sisters obviously refers to it.

She is a housewife and has always thought of herself as a housewife even though she has on occasion worked outside the home as a cook at a Nashville elementary school, and as a nursing home assistant. Her contributions are cures for the cold. She didn't know of any cures of the flu separate from the cold, because neither she nor her family differentiated between them; as far as she is concerned, colds and the flu are the same disease. She has a 7th grade education.

1.) Drink whiskey into which rock candy has been placed. "That'll make you sweat a little bit, and sweat the cold out."

2.) "What we called coal oil--that's kerosene--get you a spoon of sugar, drop 3 or 4 drops of coal oil, and 3 or 4 drops of turpentine on the sugar and take it for a cold."

3.) Rub Vick's salve on the chest and forehead.

4.) Gargle warm or hot salty water for the sore throat that goes with a cold.

5.) "Take a dose--a dose is always a spoon full--of castor oil 2 or 3 times a day for ever how long the cold lasts."

For #1, see Br 1121, which refers to kerosene wet with sugar, and also see Br 1124, which in one of the variants refers to cherry bark and whiskey. I could not find a reference to rock candy, under colds or flu, but Br 1076 lists it for chills.

For #2, see Br 1121, which mentions the kerosene and sugar mixture, but not turpentine, and also ^{see} Br 1125, which mixes kerosene and turpentine, but without the sugar.

For #3, see Br 1126, which goose grease is the object rubbed on, but which includes the palms and soles of the feet and not the forehead. Also see Br 1133, which refers to oil, turpentine, kerosene and camphor as an emulsion rubbed into affected parts--which could, with a cold, include the forehead. Camphor is an ingredient of Vick's salve, as Annie Belle calls Vick's Vapo Rub.

For #4, see Br 1172, a colic cure which mentions drinking salt water, but not gargling it.

For #5 I could find no reference to any of the cures or symptoms associated with a cold in Brown concerning castor oil. However, my other informant, when asked if she had ever heard of castor oil taken internally for a cold, stated that yes, she had, but it must be followed by a slice of orange. I could not find any reference to oranges, either, in Brown.

My second informant is Lucille Jackson, a 40 year-old Black woman who works at Vanderbilt Hospital as a unit clerk. She was born in Detroit, Michigan on October 21, 1944, of parents who had migrated there from Tennessee, and then migrated back. She considers herself a Tennessean, and has

a high school education. She states that she does not use any of these cures herself, except #9, but remembers her mother and grandmother using all of the rest, and some on her and her brothers and sisters.

6.) Make lemon stew by taking a lemon and cutting it up in water enough to cover, and boiling it. Mix the cooked lemon with sugar. Drink it while hot--as hot as you can stand it--three times a day.

7.) Take a teaspoon of sugar and wet it with Bourbon and take it.

8.) Rub your chest with Vick's Vapo Rub.

9.) Drink juice and take aspirin for the fever of a cold or flu.

10.) To prevent a cold or flu place asafetida in a sack around the neck, and wear it during the winter months.

11.) Take a teaspoon full of castor oil three times a day. Follow each dose of castor oil with a slice of orange.

For #6, see Br 1108 which refers to horehound syrup, see Br 1113 which has onion syrup as the active ingredient, and in one variant refers to onion and honey, and ^{see} Br 1248, which mixes boiled onions and honey to cure the croup, a coughing disorder. Coughs are also associated with colds and flu.

For #7, see Br 1121, see Br 1124, the former of which refers to sugar and kerosene, the latter of which has a variant which refers to whiskey.

For #8, see Br 1126, which refers to goose grease rubbed on chest, palms and soles of the feet.

For #9, see Br 1100, which refers to eating and drinking a great deal of water. Brown 1105, 1106, 1107, 1109, 1110, 1111, 1115, 1117, 1119, 1120, and 1123 all refer to various teas as cold cures, but not specifically to juices. I could find no reference to aspirin.

For #10, Br 1099 and Br 1745 refer to asafetida in a sack around the neck, Br 1745 also mentions sulphur.

For #11, again, I could find no reference to colds or flu, or symptoms listed separately for either, and castor oil. My #6 see Br 1065 and 1066, which refer to eating a lemon, but not boiling it or adding sugar to make a syrup, which would also apply to my #11, as a variant.