

COLUMN FOR SOAP, PERFUMERY AND COSMETICS SEPTEMBER

The Millennium

I am bored with the millennium, fed up with the millennium bug, unimpressed by the millennium dome (uninspired by an upturned Weber barbeque) and a lot of guff about a mathematical certainty. So here are a few thoughts about the millenium after the next one.

The dawn of a new day 2999

I stepped onto the Bosch Medi-Analyser, which promptly demanded my name. I told it I was called Anthony and it asked why I had the traditional name for a hamster. I thought that I detected the merest hint of a snigger as it spoke out my weight. A blue beam scanned me from head to toe, the panel on the wall faltered and the process repeated. It informed me that I appeared to have bits missing and so I explained that most of these were removed during my childhood, except for the last pieces, which were removed a decade ago. The machine made a few buzzing, squeaky noises, giggled a little and then started to guffaw.

After a time it seemed to recover its composure and proceeded to extract (by vacuum) waste products, while taking a small sample of blood from a pinprick it made on the skin. It issued a detailed analysis of blood chemistry and offered a choice of diet for the day, from which I made a selection. It did not understand bacon 'butty', and likewise a pig meat sandwich drew a blank.

It asked whether I would like to have my hormone levels readjusted, because it could synthesise some testosterone from a blend of phytosterols which included diosgenine from *Dioscorea villosa* and β -ecdysone (a phytosteroid hormone) from *Pfaffia paniculata* or Brazilian ginseng amongst many others that it quoted. This might rejuvenate my somewhat jaded appearance and restore some youthful vigour to my skin.

It also enquired whether I would like to have my old tonsils back, because it could easily grow some new ones from the DNA sequence it had recovered in the blood sample, and could be grafted back in place after a few days. It also offered to reconnect the bits that made a man's eyes water.

The Braun Cleansomatic Hygiene System showed a green light and was instructed to give the full cycle. It shuddered at the appearance of bodily hair (not at all fashionable in 2999) and recommended that it be removed. I queried how this might be achieved and it recommended the depilatory α -amino-3-hydroxy-4-oxo-1(4H)-pyridineproanoic acid (mimosine) treatment, which had been obtained from a member of the Leguminosae family. It explained that all active

chemicals were now based on botanical biosynthesis, which could be grown in broth and extracted almost at will.

The machine offered only a single choice for cleaning both hair and body, it seemed the need for a multiplicity of cleansing products had disappeared. These were based on modified triterpenoid saponins from plants like *Saponaria officinalis* (Soapwort), *Sapindus indica* (Indian Soapnut) and other high-bearing saponin plants. In addition, the development of surfactants based on natural betaines from various beets had been perfected. Washing with water was a luxury, it had to be reclaimed at source and recycled, but the machine could degrease and dry-clean if preferred. I did not prefer.

The care and control of hair was achieved using topical treatments once the hair had been cleaned. Tonics, conditioners, or anti-dandruff preparations were all applied while the hair was still damp and then the hair dried. The dandruff preparations included *Monnina salicifolia*, *Knautia arvensis*, *Polgonum* spp, *Galium aperine* and *Arctium lappa*.

My hair was a major source of concern, and the machine could not understand why it was missing in certain areas. It communicated with the Medi-Analyser and decided on some additional dietary factors, which included niacin (from *Avena sativa* and *Hordeum vulgare*), and fractions of *Salix alba*, *Crocus sativus* and *Prunus amygdalus dulcis*. A blend of plants known as Shen Ying Yang Zhen Tang (Divinely Responding Nourishing the True Decoction) an ancient Chinese remedy was also prescribed internally. Shen Ying Yang Zhen Tang was composed of: Rhizoma Gastrodiae elatae (Tian Ma), Radix Albus Paeoniae lactiflorae (Bai Shao), Radix Angelicae sinensis (Dang Gui), Semen Cuscutae (Tu Si Zi), Fructus Chaenomelis lagenariae (Mu Gua), prepared Radix Rehmanniae (Shu Di), 10g, Radix Ligustici wallichii (Chuan Xiong), Radix et Rhizoma Notopetrygii (Qiang Huo), 7g. Other topical products were scheduled for later in the week based on plant molecules that resembled Minoxidil.

If this treatment failed and the hair did not want to come out of the catagen stage, then they had another series of phytochemicals that might trigger the appropriate cytokines to fire up and take the cycle of hair growth to the telogen and early anagen cycle . Failing that, I might like to consider an implant of newly cultured hair follicles replicated from my own cells.

A jug of recycled water and a biscuit of bran-like material appeared from a slot in the Medi-Analyser. I decided that though this was not the breakfast that I had ordered, and as the biscuit had a striking resemblance to a 'Hob Nob', that I would eat it anyway. The machine waited patiently until I had finished and then asked why I had eaten the recycled nutrients intended for the hydroponic garden, I explained that us hamsters often did strange things in foreign places.

Next month: more horrific shocks to come, dreadful news about fashion, more ghastly revelations.