

NIPPUR OLD DRUGSTORE

HERB doctors, Medicine men, and Drugstore prescriptions, may now trace their origin to a respectable antiquity: a welcome piece of news to the *Bulletin* readers. Among the many clay tablets from Nippur preserved in the Museum collections, there is a remarkable document, inscribed in the cuneiform character, of early pre-Sargonic style—about 2600 B. C.—which roused considerable interest at a recent surgical convention held in Philadelphia. It would have proved just as interesting to Friend John Bartram, in his famous botanical garden on the bank of the Schuylkill, or to his London patron, Sir Hans Sloane, whose Chelsea Medical Garden and Herbarium were the cornerstone of the British Museum foundation.

The tablet—16 x 9.5 cm.—so long dormant in our drawers, is well preserved on the reverse. The obverse is unfortunately almost illegible except for a few lines. Photograph, transliteration and translation, as far as possible will help to realise the early use of drugs, prescriptions and the elaborate treatment of a burnt foot.



The drugs include various herbs, plants, seeds, flour, wheat, barley, cassia, balsam, salt, sesame and cedar oils, powdered woods, thorn root and twig, hot beer, water, etc., which it is prescribed to wash, pound, boil on fire, pour, sprinkle, plaster, anoint, clean—peel!—and mix with the water.

For the treatment of a burnt foot, strange things like a water snake, a cow's teat, perhaps as an artificial skin are prescribed, also an ingenious dripping machine for washing the dust from the foot.

But the old text may speak for itself.

L. L.

C. B. S. 14221.

[Obv. destroyed]

Ob: *šim-si dē*
kaš ab-ta-dē
izi ū-ta-ab-dē
a-bi iā nig-LAG id-da (:)
 Rev: *ū-tu*
lū al-nag-nag.

Balsam . . . is poured;
 A potion is poured out of it;
 pour it out of the fire;
 (into) the liquid introduce
 oil from . . . the river (:)
 The man shall drink it

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giš-ma + gunu babbar
e-rī-na ū(d)-nannar
ū-gaz
kaš-e ū-tu
lū al-nag-nag

White *ma* . . . wood,
 Twig (?) of Moon plant,
 pound;
 introduce in the potion.
 The man shall drink it.

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*

numun nig-nagar-šar
šim-mar-ka-zi
ū ha-šu-an-um
ū-gaz
kaš-e ū-tu
lū al-nag-nag

Seed of the "carpenter," herb
 balsam *mar-ka-zi*,
 plant *ha-šu* of *Anu*,
 pound;
 introduce in the potion,
 The man shall drink it

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*

lū-ba-šu-gūr
ū-a-gil ab-dū-dū
bar nig-KA + im-na
nidaba-si-šar
mun
pisan + ziz

Unto the man, whose foot
 caught a burn, from
 things in the furnace,
 a full-barley herb,
 salt,
 cassia,

ù-ḥal-la
 ùr-e ù-ra
 kaš-sig 5
 a-iši ù-ni-tu 5
 du-a-bi an-sud-bi
 ù-ni-sud
 ià-giš ù ià-erim
 giš ù-ku
 ù-gaz
 an-tu-tu
 muš-u ù-laḥ ù-gaz
 ú ama-maš-um-kaš-šar
 e-muš + muš-na giš-gír
 nidaba gaz
 še gam-gam zi
 Ku-si-ib Hu
 a ù-dé
 ù-izi
 a-bi an-tu 5-tu 5
 a ù-ni-tu 5
 ià-giš ù ià-erim
 šà-ki an-tu-tu

ubur-bur šà-ga áb
 ù-laḥ ù-gaz
 ḥad giš-gír
 ù-mul
 giš-ma + gunu babbar
 mun-ib
 a ù-dé
 ù-izi
 a-bi an-tu 5-tu 5
 a ù-ni-tu 5
 izi ú-a-gil an-tu-tu

[]-dun (?)
 []-bur giš-a-tu-gab-
 ta a-an-tu rá-a
 saḥar dug-gír-bi
 Ku-šum-ma geštin
 ú nig-gíg
 ú a-rí-na
 e-muš + muš ù giš
 izi an-tu-tu.

rush on;
 plaster on the leg;
 fine barley beer,
 pour in hot water;
 on the whole stretch
 anoint it;
 sesame and cedar oil,
ašuhū wood,
 pound; it shall be
 put over it
 A water snake, wash, pound;
 a plant *ama-maš-um-kaš-šar*
 a root of thorn,
 crushed barley,
 wheat (?) reduced to flour
 the herb of the *kasipu* bird
 pour into water,
 boil on fire.
 the water is poured over,
 pour water on it.
 sesame and cedar oil
 on top shall be put

The milk teat of a cow,
 wash, pound;
 a thorn rod,
 polish (peel ?);
 White *ma* . . . wood,
 with salt,
 pour into water;
 boil on fire;
 the water is poured over,
 pour water on it.
 on the fire-burn it is put.

[] . . .
 From a (tub ?) of *šarbatu*
 wood, water on high, moves
 dirt of the foot jar,
 Slashed stem of vine
azallu plant,
arina plant,
 root and stock,
 are put in the fire.