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## "DR." H. H. CRIPPEN.

### A STUDY IN QUACKS AND QUACKERY.

BY SURDUS.

SINCE 1904, when I first came into contact with him, I have had frequently to write of "Dr." H. H. Crippen, and no doubt I have said some hard things concerning him; but I am open to confess that when I drew my character sketch of the man it did not occur to my mind that he would one day achieve the particularly unpleasant fame which has since fallen to him. But no writer can venture to hope to forecast the trend of any one human character.

A short, weedy man of about forty-five years of age, Crippen had in his face and person all the indications of a dissolute and degenerate life, and it was obvious that drink and a weak will-power had had much to do with the level to which he had sunk when I originally met him. As this Magazine goes to press, Crippen has just been captured, and no doubt he will have to face an indictment for murder; but it has yet to be proved that he is guilty of the particular crime. Normally, he would not be capable of all that is alleged against him—he lacks the will-power and the nerve.

My chief interest in this case is in the material it affords for the study of quackery, and in the revelations it has brought to light regarding Crippen's career and the inner history of deafness quackery. In my day I have had personal meetings with practically every deafness quack who has advertised. Crippen and the man who trades as "Herbert Clifton" are men of exactly the same type—degenerates drifting from rock to rock. These two men are really the originals of the deafness quack depicted in my "Dr. Flynn." The man behind the "Dr. Moore's Aerial Medication" fake was likewise a very low type; and the "doctor" concerned in the Hoffmann Earphone swindle is one for whom I feel a sincere pity, for, here again, habitual drinking has brought low a fairly decent and tolerably well-equipped man. Edward Marr, otherwise "Keith-Harvey," is a man of totally different type

from those just mentioned: he is one handling business propositions of any class and taking very good care of himself all the time. In person, Marr struck me as being a very clean and exceedingly pleasant man, the originator of nothing, but the engineer of very much. He is the sort of man whom you will find using as tools the Crippens and the Cliftons.

So far as can be ascertained, Crippen is one who started with medical equipment of no mean order, and in his best days he held some responsible medical appointments. In 1882 he appears to have been finishing his medical education, and was working in the chemical laboratory of the State University of Michigan, and two years later he graduated from the Cleveland College Hospital, Ohio, taking his M.D.; in 1887 he was acting as aural and ophthalmic surgeon at the New York State Ophthalmic Hospital, becoming later a lecturer at this same institution. In 1899 he was assistant surgeon at another New York hospital, besides being an editor engaged on a medical publication. From 1889 his downfall commences, and after 1900 his name no longer appears on Polk's Medical Directory. About this date his connexion with Munyon, one of the worst quacks in existence, commenced, and thereafter Crippen's story is the story of a medical derelict drifting from one quackery to another, and sinking, if slowly, none the less surely. In 1904 he was to be found in association with the Drouet Institute, at Marble Arch, London, acting as one of the "consulting specialists" employed by the individual who was then running this most gigantic fraud on the Deaf. When the Drouet Institute was finally smashed up, Crippen appears to have taken or purchased from the wreck whatever he thought might be useful, and I believe that he afterwards made more than one effort to re-float the concern. At any rate, he was behind the "Dean Drug Company," which made one such attempt.

Almost at the very moment of the Drouet Institute smash, Crippen commenced to trade as M. Franckel, pushing a stuff called "Ohrsorb," supposed to have been invented by a Barron Mackamotski for the cure of deafness. Evidently the "Doctor" is a bit of a wag, for, remembering the write-up I had given him in connexion with the Drouet Institute, he sent me one of the first copies of the original edition of his Mackamotski "Ohrsorb" booklets, which I still retain. I recollect how the thing puzzled me at the time, until at length I managed to get to the bottom of it, and exposed the fake and Franckel. I also recollect my unavailing efforts to arrive at close



quarters with "Franckel." The newspapers are incorrect in stating that Crippen managed the Drouet Institute—he was merely one of many employees, and originally he was taken on in place of Drouet's regular "specialist." A man who so vilely mismanages his own career, as Crippen had done, will never be found managing anything satisfactorily—he merely drifts about, the tool of others and the victim of his own besetting vice.

As "Dr. H. H. Crippen," the subject of this sketch came to the fore again last year, when he was working in connexion with the "Aural Remedies Company," and advertising from Craven House, Kingsway. His literature was nothing but a slightly modified reprint of the Drouet Institute literature, and I promptly exposed the whole concern. It now appears that the moving spirit behind the "Aural Remedies Company" was none other than our old friend "Keith-Harvey," and that, although the Craven House address was used for the advertisements, the real business was being transacted from Keith-Harvey's offices in Vine Street, Clerkenwell. This explains the mystery regarding the Vine Street office, to which I referred in the last issue of this Magazine. Harvey, it seems, was paying Crippen the magnificent salary of two pounds a week for the use of his name, assistance, and, I suppose, the "Ohrsorb"—Drouet Institute stock-in-trade. I have also discovered that "Keith-Harvey" is behind the "Sanalak Company," and he also appears to be behind "Erasmus Colman, Catarrh Specialist" and "Mr. Hamilton, Obesity Specialist."

These revelations should provide food for thought to those of the Deaf who feel inclined to try each and every remedy for deafness that may be advertised; and they will stand as reply to the few of my readers who have blamed me for being "too hard" on the quacks. It is perfectly clear that numbers of deaf people have been swindled over and over again by one and the same quack, masquerading under different fancy names. Take Crippen, for example, he was in the Drouet Institute swindle, the originator of the vaseline remedy he called "Ohrsorb," the man behind the "Dean Drug Company" deafness fake, and finally was mixed up with "Keith-Harvey" in the Aural Remedies Company. I daresay plenty of readers have been through the net of the Drouet Institute, "Keith-Harvey," and the Aural Remedies Company. If the Crippen case has no other good effect it may serve to prove to the Deaf how utterly hopeless and idle it is to expect the least benefit from any advertising quack.

As the use made by quacks of bogus American degrees has made many people look askance at all American degrees, I may point out

that there are perfectly genuine American degrees, which in many cases are equivalent to English degrees; and that the legitimate practice of medicine and surgery has attained to a very high degree of excellence in the United States. In some branches of medicine I believe that the American specialists can give us points, and, personally, I prefer some American text books to the English ones. Crippen's degrees and qualifications were perfectly genuine, and, at the outset, it appears to be clear that he was a medical specialist of promise. I suppose some readers will ask why, if such was the case, Crippen was not as good as a quack as he might have been as a respectable specialist, since he held valid qualifications. The reply is that once a medical man descends to quackery and loses caste in his profession he is usually lost; and of all the dangerous members of society there can be none more dangerous than a medical man or a solicitor who has come down in the scale. The very fact of the possession of knowledge without the will-power not to abuse it, constitutes the danger.

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## THE DANGERS OF QUACKERY.

MANY people prefer to run the risk of dangers they only imperfectly apprehend rather than spend money upon professional treatment. Such considerations send many to the quack institutes, where they are promised a cure for a pound or two. There is no trouble about examination or attendance; it is all absurdly simple. I have seen people who honestly believed that they had exhausted the resources of "science" by a correspondence with the Drouet Institute. Possibly doctors do not take sufficient trouble to dissuade their patients from wasting their time and money on ignorant pretenders. As it is often the innocent child that has to suffer, the family medical man should speak seriously as to the duties of parents. There is no doubt that many lives are sacrificed every year to the meanness of parents, who will not put their children under medical care until too late. Most doctors could bring forward instances of such criminal neglect, and, usually, it is the doctor who is blamed in the end. The above remarks refer to people who can and should afford efficient medical attendance, and not to the poorer classes.

F. FAULDER WHITE, F.R.C.S.

(In "Infected Ears: Intrameatal Treatment.")