

Hunk o' Skin*
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(The melody is from Kipling's "Gunga Din")

You may talk of lungs and liver,
Of the twins you did deliver
And the kidney stones that passed you in the night;
But when it comes to itching,
All your fingers will be twitching
For the ointment that had better expedite.

Now in clinics in my prime
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of the poor and all their kin;
Why, the finest hours spent
In that bleak environment,
Were the ones that were devoted to the skin.

For it's skin! skin! skin!
With your Merkel and your prickle cells so thin;
Though you nourish, cool, protect us,
Even cleanse and disinfect us,
For your ailments all you get is glycerine.

If it's acne on the face,
Or a cancer to erase,
Keratoses, warts or nevi to excise;
It's the skin that has to bear
Every suture — every tear,
While we hyfredate it, burn and cauterize.

When your toes are raw and red
And infection's apt to spread
To lymphatics in the groin and then beyond;
It's the skin that takes the brunt
Of diseases on the hunt;
It's the organ that's the first one to respond.

I shan't forget the night,
One-O-Seven Fahrenheit!
With the sweat a-pourin' out from thick and thin.
Now you know what saved the day?
Not your lungs or your toupee;
'Twas that large imposing organ we call skin!

Yes, it's skin! skin! skin!
Though we hate the fact that you're so alkaline.
While we wash and scrub and oil you,
Fancy creams can only spoil you,
It's ourselves that we must learn to discipline.

In psoriasis we find
Cause and treatment ill-defined,
And we know that in the end it's all the same:
Triamcinolone and tar,
Sulfur ointment in a jar,
And despite what certain drug houses declaim.

When there's shingles on the flank
Of some old and testy crank,
And there's pain along the course of some large nerves;
It's the skin they'll always blame
In that diagnostic game;
Is that all the reputation it deserves?

So we'll try our best to heal
Every papule — every wheal,
While we pledge our lives to dermal betterment;
We'll be careful, neat, and quick
With our scalpels sharp and slick,
As we treat our large integument.

'Cause it's skin! Skin! Skin!
With your oil and sweat glands choking to the brim;
Though we pick and dig and scratch you,
By the fibers that attach you,
You're our very bread and butter — Hunk o' Skin!

* With apologies to Rudyard Kipling's "[Gunga Din](#)"