

CHEMISTRY

Plastic Packages

Research Brings Attractive New Transparent Wrappings To Replace Glass; Early American Theme for Some

By WATSON DAVIS

OIL IN a plastic bottle.

Augers and clothes line in transparent revealing dress.

Fresh carrots packaged in almost invisible bags.

Medical tablet tins that flip open at the press of your thumb.

These and some 30,000 other new kinds of packages, about to parade in our stores by the millions, are the packaging industry's offering to the American public this year.

Each spring leading designers and manufacturers and users of the new boxes, bags, bottles, jars and other containers place their best and most novel products on display. You will see them in your home or upon store shelves.

Scientific research aids packaging prog-

ress by producing new materials or applications and inventing clever ways to make the packaging of merchandise better, more convenient, more attractive and more economical.

Transparent wrappings and containers for almost everything from silver to cheese have been made possible by the application of new materials to the problems of packaging. Showing the article and yet protecting it has become a prevailing mode.

Replacing glass containers that are costly to ship and may break, lubricating oil is now sold in transparent, unbreakable plastic bottles. Even the label is transparent, consisting of a cellulose acetate sheet that is pressed into the plastic oil-can's shell to become a part of it. Designed primarily for sportsmen, the new oil dispenser is only a fifth the weight

of the glass bottle previously used.

Hanks of clothes line are now housed in cellulose bags that do not conceal the merchandise but keep it clean. One trick in this new package is that two 50-foot hanks are connected by a strand of the rope and the clerk can sell a continuous 100-feet or give the customer 50 feet by a snip of the shears.

Carpenters and amateur handymen about the house can see the auger bits they are buying when they are packaged in transparent cellulose capsules, instead of the old-fashioned brown paper wrappings or wooden boxes.

Carrots, garden-fresh, are now being furnished the housewife in sanitary pre-packed containers of transparent sheeting made from a rubber derivative. These moisture-tight bags can be re-used in the refrigerator for wrapping other food.

The latest kind of silver chest is made of a transparent plastic material so that the shiny ware can be displayed in store and home and be admired.

A prize-winning package of several years ago was transparent rubber hydrochloride sheeting for containing processed cheese. This year the same general method is being applied to wrapping natural cheese that heretofore has been marketed in bulk "wheels" familiar in the delicatessen showcase. There is no rind or dried surface.

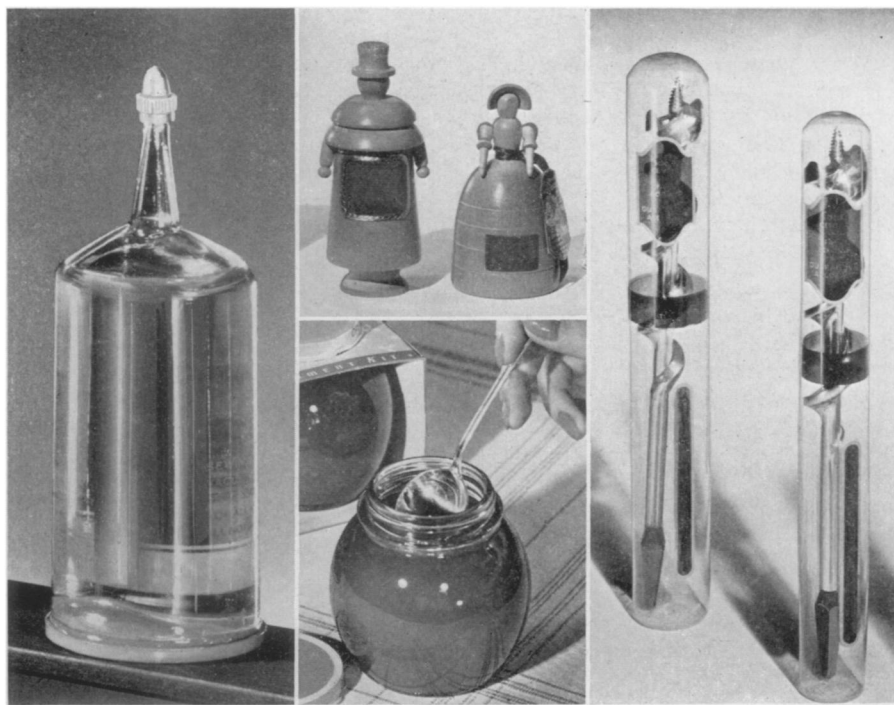
Sliced Through Wrapping

Cheese also appears in colorless wax and cellophane dress ready for table use, with size of the pieces such that it can be sliced through the wrapping right at the table.

The latest development in tin containers is the flat box that opens with a press of the thumb, not the breaking of a fingernail. Wire hinges are replaced by a lug arrangement that securely attaches the top to the base and allows finger pressure at the back of the box to open it. It is used to pack medical tablets.

Soiled hands in the interest of white shoes are prevented by a new dispensing closure for shoe cleaner. Instead of the mussy sponge, the bottle has a fiber-covered rubber top with which the white stuff is applied directly to the shoe.

Manicure cosmetics for making nails colorful now come in collapsible tubes with brush or felt self-applicator tops in-



GLAMOUR ON THE COUNTER

Oil now comes in a transparent plastic bottle (left) that is unbreakable and reveals the contents. Wooden containers for cosmetics (center above) represent "the Governor" and old "Miss Boston." Catsup is packed in a jar (center below) to eliminate bottle-thumping. In transparent capsules, (right) auger bits are protected, yet they can easily be examined.

stead of ordinary bottles. A press of the tube allows the enamel or other material to flow on the nails without muss or leakage.

Molded plastics of brilliant colors replace the aluminum previously used on a popular double-capped shaving stick, incidentally saving aluminum for defense.

Wooden figures of "Miss Boston" and the "Governor" of old New England, as well as jugs, maple sugar kettles, butter churns and other characteristic shapes, are used to package one brand of toilettries. Still other products show the return to early American tradition in the design of their containers.

No More Pounding

Pounding the bottom of a long-necked catsup bottle is no longer necessary because a new design makes the catsup and chili sauce container a wide-mouthed, low center of gravity jar from which the red sauce can be ladled with a spoon.

Every tobacco tin becomes its own humidior in a new pound smoking mixture container. Into the inside of the knob on the lid the user inserts a small, moistened sponge.

Wire staples of new design are used to fasten buttons on sales and display cards. Old method was to sew them on. The staples are cheaper and buttons can be removed one at a time instead of all of them coming loose when the first is used.

Even the familiar glass milk bottle has been beautified and reshaped in the interests of better service. It is a quarter lighter (weight saving of 5 ounces) and 10 per cent shorter to fit more easily in the refrigerator.

A new toilet paper container holding 21 rolls is attractively decorated and when emptied turns into a waste basket for the home.

Rubber toy soldiers march out upon a cardboard stage provided by a new display package which more than tripled the sales of this product.

Jars, crocks and kitchen utensils of America's early days are copied in the crockery and earthenware packages being used to market savories such as conserves, fish chowder, puddings, and tea. These packages are used on the dinner table long after their original contents have been eaten.

Containers of cosmetics and shaving preparations for men are based on a little jug found in the tomb of an Egyptian pharaoh, and its dress is Scotch, authentically patterned after the highland tradition.



EARLY AMERICAN

Conserves and other old-fashioned savories are packed in jars that recall early American crockery.

Among the other displays that have won awards in the 10th Annual All-American Package Competition, sponsored by Modern Packaging Magazine, New York, are displays that attract the attention of purchasers to the goods that they want.

One display being used in drug stores for medical products glows attractively without any light source within it. The reason is that fluorescent materials are incorporated in the plastic material of which the display stand is made. The ultraviolet radiation in daylight or arti-

ficial lighting is converted into luminous glow that suffuses the whole fixture.

One display for oil at filling stations uses an old auto tire to make it heavy enough to stay put in wind or rough handling. A beer display became more effective when a real handkerchief was used to wipe the overheated brow of the man reaching for a glass.

Leaders of the package industry will gather at Chicago early in April when the awards of the competition will be presented.

Science News Letter, March 22, 1941

ANTHROPOLOGY-MEDICINE

Israelites of Bible Credited With High Skill in Medicine

ISRAELITES of the Bible had vast medical knowledge for their time, and were deeply steeped in Egypt's medical lore, Prof. Abraham S. E. Yahuda, formerly teacher of Hebrew Literature in the University of Madrid, told a lecture audience at the New York Academy of Medicine.

The vivid description of Biblical leprosy in Leviticus 13 and the curses of fever, itch and assorted ills in Deuteronomy 28 were cited by Prof. Yahuda as examples that could have been written

only by a person perfectly acquainted with ancient Egyptian medical practices and terminology. The medical descriptions, he said, add strength to the traditional view that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, about the time when the Israelites made their Exodus flight from Egypt.

Study of the medical references, he emphasized, refutes the contention of some Biblical critics that Hebrew medical knowledge in that time was "small