

Gentian And The Jamaican Mother

Every now and den inna {mosmodule phpinc=ttpopup.php,Jamaica}, yuh buck up a lickle boy or girl wid a purple mouth. No, it is not the latest shade of lipgloss; it is the Jamaican mother's fix and cure everyting panacea – Gentian Violet.

Thankfully the practice is not as common these days (do I hear an “Amen” from all the children?), but there was a time in {mosmodule phpinc=ttpopup.php,Jamaica} where, if yuh ever get a cut or a sore, then yuh know - here comes the Gentian, that purple stinky chemical stuff that mark yuh skin fi days. All who never know say yuh had a cut or a sore, will now know. The truth is that Gentian works like a charm. But L awd, di indignity of having to sport a purple mouth, purple hand, purple foot or purple scalp for days. Mi think it is an affront to the self esteem of little children to have dem purple- up and blue- up, by a mother or grandmother who would announce at the first sign of a cut of scrape “Come meck Mi gentian yuh up.” Now it is bad an not so bad when di Gentian is applied to a ‘pop toe’, or a buck off toe, or a cut on the knee. But mothers in {mosmodule phpinc=ttpopup.php,Jamaica} seem to get extra joy when they apply gentian to ‘buss head’ and the worst offence of all, the application of gentian violet to sore mouth. Now, plenty Jamaican pickney know what it is to eat green mango (despite the caution of the adults to leave di mango dem pon di tree till dem ripe) … but if yuh never eat green mango yet, half of yuh life missing. But when a green mango go fi burn up yuh mout cawna yuh know … dog nyam yuh supper. When di pain and di discomfort lick yuh, yuh willingly submit yuhself to grandma or mummy, for dem to apply di gentian violet to yuh mout. When them finish, you mout look like one mash up bunch of grape, because everybody purple – teeth, lip, tongue, gum. The worst part of it is that, gentian don’t wash off overnight, so yuh will be sporting your Gentian badge of honour for at least three days.