

THE COMPOSITION OF CERTAIN SECRET REMEDIES.*

A "FLESH PRODUCER."

A PREPARATION named Sargol has been very widely advertised of late for the increase of flesh and development of the figure of persons who are too thin; the advertisements often include pictures intended to represent the results to be attained. One of these advertisements is headed:

We invite every thin man, woman, and child here. Every Person in the British Isles to Eat With Us at Our Expense.

Other extracts are:

This is an invitation that no thin man or woman can afford to ignore. We'll tell you why. We are going to give you a food that helps digest the other foods—a food that puts good solid flesh on people who are thin and underweight, no matter what the cause may be. A food that makes brain in five hours and blood in four—a food that puts the red corpuscles in the blood which every thin man or woman so sadly needs. . . .

Chew one up with every meal, and in five minutes after you take the first concentrated tablet of this precious food it will commence to unfold its virtues, and it will by actual demonstration often increase the weight at the rate of one pound a day.

Application to the Sargol Co. at the address given brought a small package of the tablets, with a circular letter, which was followed at intervals by others. We subjoin a few sentences from these lengthy documents:

Whether your lack of bodily weight comes to you by inheritance, by overwork, by indoor occupation, or no matter what you have done or how many ineffectual preparations you have tried, Sargol will be a revelation to you.

Remember; until the discovery of Sargol, nothing has ever been known which could be depended upon to put 10, 15, and even 30 pounds of permanent, healthy tissue on a thin person's body.

As we receive so many letters from people who say they have been disappointed and deceived by so-called fatteners we think it best to take you into our confidence and give you some of the inside facts relative to Sargol. By a recent discovery it is now possible to reproduce chemically a very important natural fatty substance which is found in the yolk of eggs, in the roe of fishes, in the blood, also in the brain and nerve tissue of human beings. This substance can now be obtained in a highly concentrated form in combination with other valuable, vitalizing, and tissue building agents. . . .

Each dose of Sargol contains a generous amount of this newly discovered substance, the very element which thin folks lack. Each time you take a Sargol tablet you are introducing directly into your system in concentrated form, the actual fat forming substance which you so sadly need; and yet this is but one of the component parts of Sargol. Five other strength giving, fat producing elements of known and acknowledged merit, and great potency are carefully combined to form this peerless preparation.

A box of Sargol, price 4s. 6d., was found to contain 30 tablets; it is strongly recommended that a six weeks' supply, equal to six 4s. 6d. boxes, should be obtained, the price of this being 21s. The directions are:

1. Take one tablet with each meal and one at bed-time. 2. Be reasonable as regards diet.

The tablets were sugar coated and coloured pink. After removal of the coating they had an average weight of 5.3 grains. Analysis showed them to contain lecithin, hypophosphites of calcium, sodium, and potassium, zinc phosphide, sugar, albumen, and insoluble protein, with talc and kaolin or similar mineral matter, evidently added as excipient. In the course of the analysis it was necessary to obtain more than one supply of the tablets, and the different specimens showed a large variation in the proportions of some of the ingredients. The amounts actually found were:

Zinc phosphide	0.7 per cent.
Lecithin	1.9 "
Calcium hypophosphite ...	12.9 "
Sodium and potassium hypophosphites	7.7 "
Albumen (soluble)	4.2 "
Insoluble protein (? coagulated albumen)	10.8 "
Sugar	18.0 "
Talc, kaolin, moisture, etc.	

Estimated cost of materials for thirty tablets, about 1½d.

* Previous articles of this series were published in the following issues of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL: 1904, vol. ii, p. 1585; 1906, vol. ii, pp. 27, 1645; 1907, vol. i, p. 213; vol. ii, pp. 24, 160, 209, 393, 530, 1653; 1908, vol. i, pp. 833, 942, 1375; vol. ii, pp. 86, 505, 1022, 1110, 1193, 1285, 1566, 1697, 1875; 1909, vol. i, pp. 31, 909, 1128; vol. ii, p. 1419; 1910, vol. i, pp. 151, 213, 393, 1005, 1063, 1120; vol. ii, pp. 982, 1350, 1928; 1911, vol. i, pp. 26, 91, 823, 1324; vol. ii, pp. 32, 77, 456, 767, 854, 1543; 1912, vol. i, p. 26, 141, 318, 438, 683, 791.

MEDICAL REPORTS FROM CONSULATES IN CHINA.

THE series of medical reports from H.M. Consulates in China recently issued by the Foreign Office is edited by Dr. Douglas Gray, of the British Legation, Peking. The reports are concerned with the year ending September, 1911.

The general impression gained from a study of the medical reports sent from the treaty ports, seventeen in number, is that during the period under review the public health among foreigners was very good, better than for many years past. It was also fairly good among Chinese in the Central ports. But, as regards the Yang-tsze valley, typhus and relapsing fever (diseases which always occur after famine) were very prevalent. Starvation, following destruction of crops, and its ensuing loss of resistance to disease and infection, caused the deaths of many thousands. The editor of these reports seems to think that the political trouble in China may have been in part due to a state of general unrest produced by the high rate of sickness and mortality. In an agricultural empire such as China, with 80 per cent. of its inhabitants tillers of the soil, the vast majority know little and care less for political vagaries, and as long as crops are plentiful are willing and able to pay the usual taxes without troubling much as to the ultimate distribution of the sums collected. There can be little doubt, Dr. Gray says, that the revolutionary outbreak taking place, as it did, in the Yang-tsze valley with its ruined crops and consequent rise in the price of rice, the mainstay of Chinese diet, found, at its beginning, the people distressed in mind and body.

Tuberculosis is on the increase, and unchecked is becoming a serious scourge. Typhus, relapsing fever, cholera, small-pox, and bubonic plague appear annually, and claim a heavy toll. It is very difficult to suggest any cure for overcrowding in Chinese cities, but that a great amelioration could be effected by the Chinese themselves, the efforts, necessarily more or less limited, of foreign doctors and medical missionaries, can be cited as proof. Efficient drainage, pure water, isolation of infected cases and their contacts, ventilation of buildings, are all neglected in every Chinese city. The report states that in most places the lower classes are more ready to seek foreign medical aid than the gentry and *literati*, many of whom, in spite of lessons to the contrary, are curiously wedded to the Chinese system of medicine, which, with its superstitious notions and erroneous ideas, remains very much in the same unscientific state as it was over a thousand years ago. There is a steady annual increase in the demand for foreign medicines, which is being only partially responded to by the British drug merchants, the most active traders being the Japanese. "Patent medicines" are now extensively advertised, and the consumption of them is yearly growing greater.

Specific Diseases.

Intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and dysentery, malaria, venereal diseases, are prevalent in the order named all over the empire.

The number of deaths known to have occurred from pneumonic plague, which raged over Manchuria, Shantung, and Chih-li provinces, was 65,000. The bubonic form was not so prevalent as usual.

The year was singularly free from cholera. Probably more accurate methods of diagnosis have resulted in a clearer definition between choleraic diarrhoea and the more virulent and fatal cholera Asiatica.

Typhoid fever was less prevalent among foreigners owing to the better sanitation of the various concessions. Dr. Gray strongly urges all newcomers to submit to antityphoid inoculation.

In treaty ports and wherever foreigners are the benefits of vaccination are being made more and more known, and the epidemics of small-pox are being correspondingly limited. During 1911 there appears to have been less small-pox than has ever been noted before.

All varieties of malaria are met with in Mid and South China. The paddy fields of the rice-growing districts form the most suitable mosquito breeding grounds that could be devised. Wherever rice is grown in China there is malaria most prevalent. Quinine prophylaxis is thought to be the most hopeful measure that could be adopted.