

expressed in words, but they are distinct.
—*Brooklyn Medical Journal.*

ANALYSIS OF A BLACK SILK DRESS

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A lady paid a visit to my laboratory a short time ago and enquired whether I had ever made an analysis of a black silk dress. I confessed that among the many hundreds of various things examined in the course of a long series of years, I had only been called upon hitherto to discover the nature of certain poisonous colors applied to silk gloves and silk stockings, but I could find no analysis of a silk dress on my books.

Nevertheless, my fair visitor was anxious that I would undertake this analysis for her, and also expressed the desire that I would publish the results in the *Chemical News*, a journal which, she said, she was in the habit of reading.

Her husband was interested in the silk trade, but had little knowledge of chemistry, whilst she herself had gone through a course of practical science, and wished to convince him that the value of silk material might be ascertained by analysis. She explained, moreover, that the material she placed in my hands was intended for a silk blouse, that it was a medium quality of silk (neither the most expensive nor the cheapest), and she had heard that certain black silks, when stored in large bulk, in dry hot weather, were liable to spontaneous combustion, that two such cases were already known (one in Paris and one in New York), and she was therefore anxious that her husband should increase his insurance upon his stock of silk goods.

The following days I devoted myself to the work in question, and I found that the material contained a very large amount of substance that was not silk at all; in fact, that it was considerably "weighted," as all silks are to a greater or less extent. It would not burn with flame, but smouldered away like tinder,

and left a large amount of ash, the principal ingredient of which was oxide of tin. Indeed, I have examined specimens of poor tin ore from Cornwall that did not contain more tin than this material for a lady's blouse; and I at once realized the fact that the silk dresses worn by the ladies we see daily parading in Regent street and Bond street, taken together, would represent a Cornish mine of very fair quality.

But this enquiry has brought to light a new and powerful application of chemical analysis—already one of the greatest powers in the hands of man—namely, that the duration or wear of a silk dress can be determined by analysis. It used to be said that a garment of pure silk would last a lifetime: but I happen to be acquainted with a very clever young milliner, who has assured me that the silk material I have examined, if worn every day, would not last more than three months—meaning, of course, that by that time it would be "utterly shabby, greasy-looking and showing the threads."

The figures obtained in my analysis are as follows:—

Water	11.43
Ash (mostly tin oxide and silica)	14.30
Real silk	28.14
Organic matter, etc., not silk	46.13
	100.00
Nitrogen	4.76

The weighing of silk is now carried on to so great an extent in France, Germany, and Switzerland, that some foreign silks get shabby with a few weeks' wear; and we are seriously told that the public prefer these cheap products, as the fashions of jackets, blouses, and skirts change so rapidly that it would be useless to purchase silk of better quality!—*Chemical News.*

SYNTHETIC REMEDIES

Lactophenin, according to Dr. George Thompson (*Universal Medical Journal*, August, 1897), possesses several advantages over phenacetin. As is well known, lactophenin is a definite chemical com-