

quantities of the emulsion must be taken than of the oil itself; in fact, three times as much. And further, it is more expensive. These disadvantages, however, are compensated for by the more efficient action of the emulsion. Emulsions of petroleum are now made on an improved principle, which allows them to contain so high a percentage of petroleum as 60. And in these the emulsification is so fine that it is claimed that the petroleum is actually absorbed into the system and excreted in the urine; even if these claims are true, I cannot see that the absorption of a mineral oil is of advantage to the system; indeed, I can quite conceive that it might be very much the reverse.

The liquid paraffins which are now used in such large quantities are very much purer oils than those originally obtainable; a few of them are colored and flavored, and sold under fancy names as proprietary articles. We experimented at the St. Marylebone General Dispensary for a long time in an endeavor to flavor liquid paraffin in such a manner as to make it really agreeable to take. The best, however, that we succeeded in making was colored with chlorophyl and flavored with menthol. We called this Marylebone Crème de Menthe, and it has been very well received by those patients for whom it has been prescribed; and it certainly has more than a colorable resemblance to the liqueur. The great difficulty in making liquid paraffin really palatable is that comparatively few flavoring substances are soluble in it, difficulties which do not arise in the case of the emulsion.

During the last two years the use of liquid paraffins has been largely replaced by the introduction of solid forms which can be flavored and colored in any required manner; these are eaten out of a spoon like a confection or preserve, and answer all the purposes of the ordinary liquid oil.

Although in their natural state these solid paraffins look exactly like vaseline, they are, as a matter of fact, very special kinds of emulsion, and as such can take up coloring and flavoring matters to the point of saturation of the emulsifying agent.

The whole history of the discovery of these solid or emulsified paraffins is extremely interesting, but into this matter I cannot here enter. I can only refer those of my readers who are interested in the question to a paper of Mr. S. U. Pickering,* which contains a full account of the whole matter. In a private letter to me, Mr. Pickering very kindly explains how it is that an emulsion of paraffin can be made so as to appear quite transparent, and at the same time

* Emulsions by Spencer Umfreville Pickering, M.A., F.R.S. Transactions of the Chemical Society, 1907, Vol. 91.