COMMISSION FOR BELGIAN RELIEF FORMED—FOOD ARRIVES

GERMAN OFFICIALS MOST OBNOXIOUS

"Military Necessity" Is Phrase Worn Threadbare by Hun Executives, Whose Annoying Attitude Is Borne With Patience by Humanitarians Who Assume Task of Feeding Belgians.

BY BRAND WHITLOCK
United States Minister to Belgium

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MEANWHILE, in anxious impatience, we were awaiting the return of our envoys. One morning, from the unexpected direction of Berlin, came a telegram from Mr. Gerard saying that the British government had agreed to let food come into Belgium provided it was sent by the American embassy in London to the American legation in Brussels. So there was hope! We waited another week; then I had a bundle of telegrams that had come by way of The Hague, another sign of amelioration, showing that communication by way of The Hague and Antwerp had been restored.

One of the telegrams was from our ambassador in London, Dr. Page, who said that in pursuance of our request for assistance, he had asked Mr. Herbert Clark Hoover to organize a committee to raise funds and to purchase food for the Belgian civil population. There was a telegram also from Mr. Hoover, known to me then only as the American who had been at the head of the committee formed in London to assist in repatriating Americans whom the flood of war had overwhelmed. It was a sympathetic and heartening response; Mr. Hoover said that he had organized the committee which would set up at once the machinery necessary to the purchase and the shipment of the food; that the organization had been named the American commission for relief in Belgium; that it would be composed exclusively of Americans, and that, in accordance with the condition laid down by the British government, the food would be shipped to me as American minister at Brussels, under the American flag. I sent a telegram expressing the gratitude of the Belgian people, of the Comite National, and of myself, for this most generous response to our appeal, a response in which I could have my own patriotic pride and satisfaction; but I asked that my friend and colleague the Marquis of Villalobar, be included as patron in a relation identical with my own, and called attention to the efforts he had made to aid the great work. And this was done.

Relief Work Takes Shape

There was another telegram, from Gibson, asking that a thousand labels in German, with the authorization of the government, be sent at once to Rotterdam to be placed on the shipments of food about to be sent in. This had an encouraging and practical sound, and I could at once bear the good news to the gentlemen of the Comite National.

The next afternoon, at last, to my delight, the Baron Lambert, well groomed and smart as ever, came in, just back from London with the good news, and far too modest over the success of his mission. Messrs. Heineman and Francqui were to arrive in Brussels that evening; Gibson was staying on in England.

Weeks before, the Comite National had sent Mr. Millard K. Shaler, for whom, as an American citizen, we had been able to secure authorization from the Germans to leave Belgium, to London to buy food. In those days travelers had to make a great detour around by Maestriche to get out of the country, and after I succeeded in having him released from the Kommandantur at Liege, where he had been held two days as a spy, Mr. Shaler was allowed to leave and to resume his journey to London. Now he returned; he had been able to buy wheat for the Comite National but had not been able to obtain permits for its export. He could give us more details of the almost insuperable difficulties that lay in the way of the prodigious enterprise we had undertaken, difficulties which, had we been able to foresee them, would have deterred us from the attempt. We were still in a state of innocence in those days, still living in the Western world as we had known it, that world of reason and helpfulness. We were soon to learn of another world, but we did not know it then. We thought that if we could procure enough food to last over winter our troubles would be over!

Edward Curtis Arrives

However, on Saturday, October 3, there arrived at the Legation a good looking young American just graduated from Harvard, a lad with clear eyes and a strong, square jaw, Mr. Edward Curtis, a grandson of George William Curtis. He came through from Rotterdam with letters from Captain Lucey saying that the first shipment of food had arrived. He was a welcomed guest, this quiet self-restrained boy, who, the first representative of the commission to arrive in Belgium was to be the last to leave.

Early in November Gibson returned from the Odyssee that had taken him to Havre and to that little corner of Flanders left to Belgium, where, in a summer cottage in the bleak sand dunes by the sea, he had seen the king and the queen, living in the midst of that austere scene, with cold November winds blowing, and now and then a shell screaming over their roof, supporting their fate with royal fortitude. He brought back the kindest of messages from their majesties and from Baron de Groqueville and from my colleagues at Havre, and he brought back the details of the great organization Mr. Hoover was undertaking. We had been experiencing the first of those tremendous and complicated difficulties in carrying on the work of feeding the Belgians, difficulties that were destined to dog us with an almost maddening persistence during so many months and what, in their slow lapse, seemed so many years. The organization of an enterprise that had to devise ways and means of raising $10,000,000 every month of purchasing food stuffs in the distant markets of the world, in Argentine, in Canada, in America, find the means of transport across troubled and dangerous seas, and distribute it to seven millions of people in a land where the whole machinery of common life had been dislocated, where there were none of the ordinary means of communication, and to do all this in the midst of armies in the field, was a task that would have seemed insuperable a few months before.

Office Opened In Brussels

The C. R. B., as we were soon calling the commission for relief in Belgium, had offices in London, in New York and in Rotterdam, and now it was to establish an office in Brussels, and one of the first difficulties was to coordinate its relations with the gigantic organization of the C. N., as we were soon calling the Comite National.

Under the conditions imposed by the British government the food stuffs were to be consigned to the American minister at Brussels and to be distributed under his supervision; he was to be the responsible witness of the fact that there had been strict observance on the part of the German soldiers of the guarantees given by the Field Marshal Baron von der Goltz Pacha, governor general in Belgium. But since the American minister, even with the best will in the world, could not be ubiquitous, he had to have recourse to representation, and Mr. Hoover hit upon the happy device of securing the services of two score young Americans just then students at Oxford, young men who had proved their metal by winning the Rhodes scholarships. They volunteered for the work.

It would have been difficult to create such an organization in the ordinary times of peace, with everybody well disposed, but, in addition to the physical obstacles created by the chaos of war, there was an atmosphere highly charged with its various suspicions, envies, jealousies, hatreds and all the meaner passions let loose in mad fury in the world, that made it almost impossible. This stupendous organization was due largely to the genius of Herbert Clark Hoover, but the minor task of keeping peace in the family seemed by some unkind fatality to fall to the lot of the person who happened to be American minister at Brussels, and seemed to offer a convenient human substance to absorb all the numerous shocks. Perhaps it was because that substance was of the very softness sometimes irritably attributed to it when it declined or failed to range itself promptly and belligerently on one or the other side of the disagreements that almost daily distressed us; I do not know; all I know is that it seemed to be my role for a long time to induce pouting men of various nationalities and widely separated points of view and different habits of thought to meet at the legation and, over a cup of tea, notoriously an innocuous and soothing beverage, to compose or forget their differences and to allow those poor Belgians, who had no quarrel with anybody, to go on eating.

Germans in Ugly Mood

The atmosphere in Brussels during those early days in November were not congenial to accords, and indeed, it did not improve in this respect as time went on. The Germans were not in a conciliatory humor, they were, indeed, distinctly difficult and irritable. The kaiser had come to town for a day and had installed himself in the dark old palace of the d'Arenberg's there in the Petit Sablon; it was said that things were not going on well toward the sea, and down near Calais and Dunkerque; and, as I heard some time later, that the kaiser had come within 15 minutes of his death by an English aviator's bomb at Thielt. He was in a chateau there, so a German officer told me; was to lunch and leave in the imperial motor at 1:30. The imperial luncheon, however, was finished earlier than had been expected and the kaiser left in the imperial motor at 1:15. At 1:30 the aviator was hovering overhead, and the bomb dropped and exploded in the chateau. We were not at that time, however, so expert in noting the reflex actions of such incidents as we became later. But at any rate the Belgian flag and even the flag of Brussels had been ordered down from the Hotel de Ville, and because a Brussels policeman in a scuffle had struck a German secret agent the Germans fined the City of Brussels 5,000,000 francs and demanded that all policemen be disarmed and that they salute the German officers.

"What!" said one policeman. "Salute them—after they killed my father and mother!"

But whatever the cause may have been, the authorities were difficult, even those who desired to be otherwise. We began to encounter the phenomenon, not new in the world, of the tyranny of a phrase. As Socialists, for instance, speak of class consciousness, so the German officers spoke of "military necessity." We would ask that something be done, something that seemed innocent and harmless, but no, it could not be done; and when we asked why, the words "military necessity" were pronounced; often in one of the civil departments they would shrug their shoulders and say, "les militaries n'en veulent pas," ("the military does not wish it,") and that was an end of it, no use for further discussion; it was as though a prophet of old had cried, "Thus saith the Lord."

Attitude Annoying

The guarantees of the Pacha seemed clear enough, unless "messieurs les militaires" should pronounce the magic formula "une necessite militaire"; then they would become something else. We had the guarantees of the governor general permitting the food to enter and protecting it from seizure, but this document was as yet a lifeless thing; it had to be vivified by construction and by application. To render it practical it implied the means of communication and free circulation, in a word passierschein, for a large number of delegates of the C. R. B. I may as well say now that of all the food imported into Belgium by the C. R. B. during all the time we were there, the Germans never seized a grain; the guarantee was enforced and respected. But there were always military difficulties; things were done but seldom done graciously or in that grand manner.

If they did justice they did it as though they were granting a favor, and if they granted a favor they did it with a gesture that absolved the recipient of the obligation of gratitude. Our right to circulae, for instance, to come and go, was not disputed, was indeed admitted, but it seemed to be impossible to procure passierscheins which when shown to stolid sentinels would let one by. The authorities would shake their heads, shrug their shoulders and say:

"Ce sont les militaires!" ("They are soldiers!")

We discussed passierscheins for months. We had to have passierscheins for Curtis, who was to come and go between Rotterdam and Brussels bearing the C. R. B. dispatches. We had to have passierscheins for the delegates of the C. R. B., who were to travel about in Belgium; we, that is Villalobar and I had to have passierscheins for ourselves.

It was on November 5, after many consultations, that we gathered at last around the long oaken table at the American legation there in my room and had the first of those sessions that were to be so often repeated in the history of the revitallement (revictualizing) of Belgium. The personages were always the same; Mr. Hoover was present, of course, when he was in Brussels, and after the C. R. B. had a director, he made one of the council. That day, however, there was the Marquis of Villalobar, Mr. Solvay, whose snowy white hair and beard framed the kindly face of the humanitarian; Mr. Francqui, with his energy, his will, his executive force and vigor, his black eyes flashing determination or sparkling humorously in the constant sallies of his wit; the Baron Lambert, the grave banker of the old house of the Rothschilds, scrupulously elegant in attire, polished in manner, particular in little things as in big—he would never have a letter written on a typewriter, for instance; he had them all written out by hand in a script that looked as though it had been from an engraved plate—and Mr. Emmanuel Jenssen, a grandson by marriage of Mr. Solvay.

Mr. Francqui read a rough draft in which had been outlined with order and particularity the whole organization; first of the C. R. B., with its committees and headquarters in London, New York and Brussels, its shipping station at Rotterdam; then of the C. N., with its seat in Brussels, a subcommittee in each province, etc., down to the communes, and all the vast system of exchange for the finance of the enterprise, arranged by Mr. Heineman and the Geheimrath Kaufman. Thus slowly and with infinite pains the vast structure was reared, with as many complications and difficulties, as it seemed at the time, as there were at the Tower of Babel.

Food at last Is on Way

That the great orgahization, the one constructive organization left in the world, was got into such perfect and efficient order at last was due to the union of such efficient minds and wills as those of Emile Francqui and Herbert C. Hoover, though each of the others contributed his share of real ability, of patience, of good will and of a desire to serve humanity. And it was worth all it cost of pain and effort when one evening a telegram came from Rotterdam saying that grain was being sent to Liege in charge of Captain Sutherland, military attache at The Hague, and we could say that food was at last coming into Belgium!

In the first and, in many respects the best of his short stories, "Boule de Suif," a story that depicts with the remorseless precision of his impeccable and cynical art the incredible meanness of human nature, Guy de Maupassant sums up in a phrase the essential spiritual significance of the Prussian occupation of Normandy in 1870, when he says: "There was, however, something in the air, something subtle and unknown, a strange and intolerable atmosphere, like a diffused odor, the odor of invasion."

As in France in 1870, so in Belgium in 1914. It was the atmosphere, the moral odor of invasion, that was hardest to bear. To those who has been used all their lives carelessly to breathe its air, liberty, now that it was lost, became a very real and beautiful thing. It was always galling and at times maddening, even for us who were the most privileged in the land, to have every desire, every impulse, every right obstructed by a "verboten." At every prominent corner in town there were brutal German sentinels with red flags, great placards labeled "Halte" and guns, with their long bayonets fixed. Everyone must have passierscheins and personal ausweis and we floundered in a morass of regulations that made life an intolerable burden.

Hun Efficiency Is Scored

Much has been written of the cleanliness and order of German cities; I have written some of it myself; but I should rather live in a city as dirty as some I might name in France or Italy, governed by a machine as corrupt as some I have heard of in America, composed of the most renowned and reprehensible of our bosses, and have liberty as one does have it in them, than to dwell in one of those cities of Germany, with their ingangs and ausgangs, clean and regulated to the last degree, of course, but wholly without charm, and with the institutional odor of a penitentiary.

It came on us gradually, a slow closing in of the remorseless and inflexible hand of iron. To understand it one must understand the Belgian cities, full of civic pride and civic virtue, and full of liberty, too. They are free cities, and after due reflection I should say that they are the best governed cities anywhere in this world precisely because they govern themselves, and, what is more, because they have a pride in themselves, a conscious, collective, communal, civic pride. To understand it, too, one must take into account the Belgian love of democracy, the Belgian love of liberty. The king is not king of Belgium; he is king of the Belgians—Roi des Belges; there is a vast difference. This love of liberty was developed in the democratic school of the commune; it was the commune again resisting at Liege, at Dixmude and the Yser.

Each of the cities of Belgium has its marked personality, its distinct individuality; each has its peculiar charm, almost its own customs. Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Liege, all lovely, full of poetry and romance, yet all different, as sisters in one family are different. These old cities are very proud; they are proud of their history, proud of their beautiful city halls and public monuments; they are proud of their bourgmetre if he looks well in the red scarf, and they are proud of their liberty and fierce in their independence. Attacked from the outside, they all stand together, Catholic, Liberal, Socialist, Flemish and Walloon. The cities are scrupulously clean—cleanliness, indeed, is a Belgian trait; and there is an ordinance or by-law in Brussels which forbids people to wash their sidewalks or the fronts of their houses after 10 o'clock in the morning, otherwise the splashing and mopping would go on all the time.

Belgian Clocks Advanced

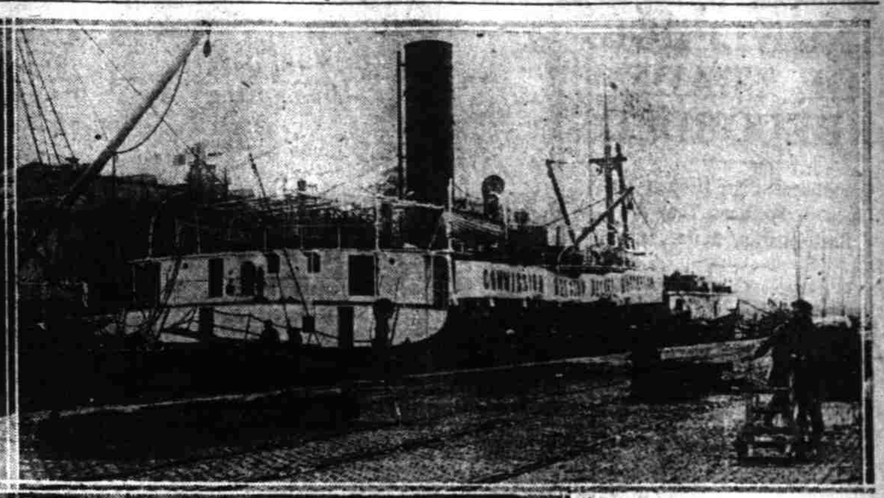
The Germans sought to introduce German ways and German regulations, tried to make them over, and to make over the people in them. The way to do this, they thought, was to issue orders and to publish them in affiches on the city walls, or to give paternal counsel, like that advice of the Pacha to the people to save the money and to put it in the savings banks where, he said, it would be respected; the advice was given at the very moment when levies were being imposed on all the cities and provinces in the land!

Not a day passed without a new and vexing regulation. In an affiche posted on November 6, there was an avis which, by the way of proving the paternal interest of the government in the people, said that the German government had done all it could to get food and fuel for the Belgians, urging the people to return to their usual employment, and advised the communal authorities not to give money to anybody who would not work, and, in the third place, announced that on and after November 8 the affairs of life would be regulated by normal time; that is, of course, German time, fifty-six minutes earlier than Belgian time, which was Greenwich or English, and prevailed all over the west of Europe.

The public clocks were duly advanced but nobody in Brussels paid the slightest attention; everyone continued to regulate by l'heure belge such affairs of life as were left to him. Turning into the Place dee la Monnaie from the rue des Friperies one afternoon I saw two women stop; one asked the hour and the other, glancing up at the clock which marked 7 o'clock, said instantly, "It's 6 o'clock." It was like that everywhere, though for us of the legations there was a complication; when we had an appointment with a Belgian we had to remember Belgian time, and in speaking to a Belgian one must remember not to refer to l'heure allemande. This fast gave rise at once to a new example of la zwanse Bruxelloise.

"The kaiser says 'they must advance on Paris,' but they don't advance; then, 'they must advance on Calais,' but they don't advance; then, 'they must advance on Cracow,' but they don't advance there, either; then he says 'we must advance the Brussels clocks one hour.'"

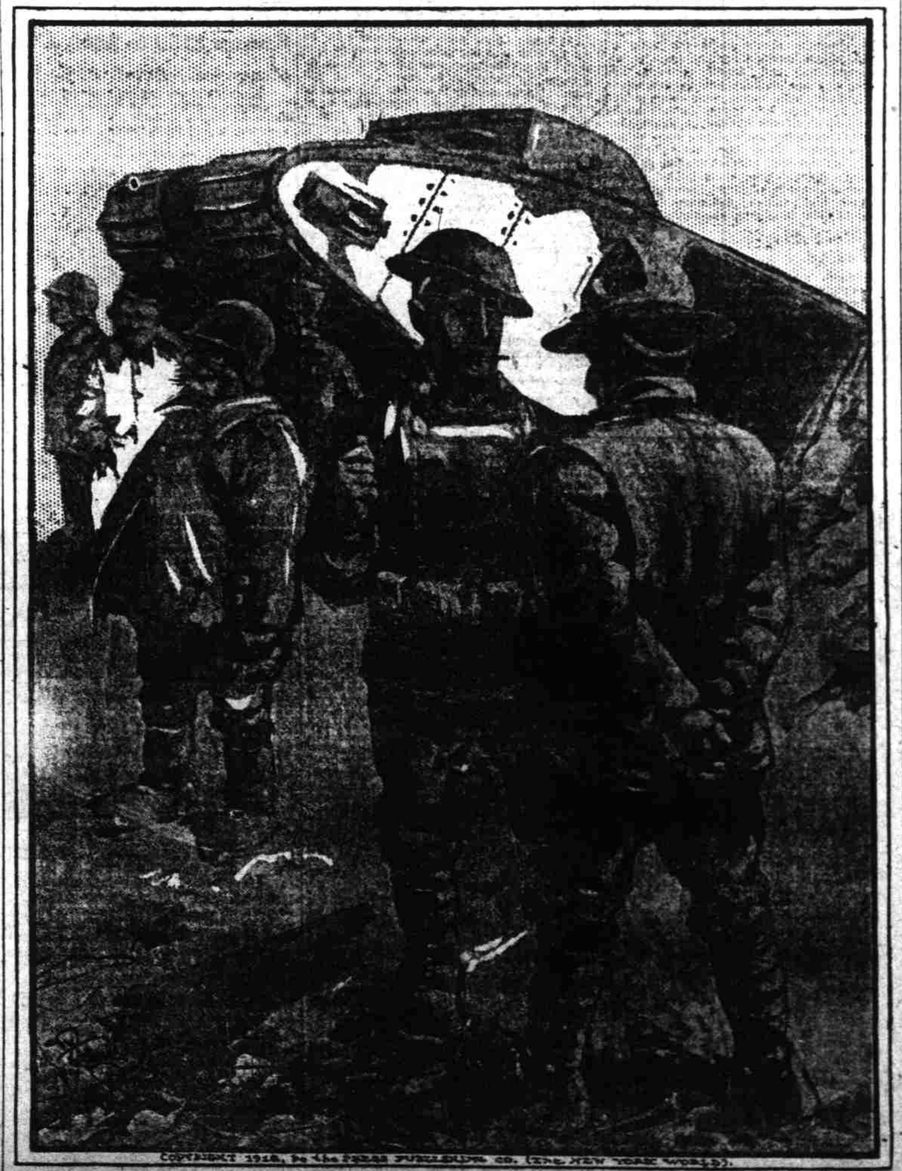
(To Be Continued Next Sunday)



—Brown Bros. Photo.

Above, left to right—Storehouse for commission for relief in Belgium at Rotterdam; American relief ship unloading at Rotterdam. Below—The commission for relief in Belgium. Herbert Hoover is seated fifth from the left, and seated, second from the right, is Chevalier E. Carton de Wiart.

FRAGMENTS FROM FRANCE - - BY BAIRNSFATHER



"Say, take a slant at this guy. He's got a salient on his western front, all right."

Yankee Horse Gets Fine Language Work

With the American Forces In Picardy, June 27.—(U. P.)—(By mail)—The American horse is an apt linguist.

Sold overseas to the French from America during the first three years of the war, he had to learn French to understand his new masters. Then sold back to America for service with his own army after the United States entered the war, he had to learn English, or rather American all over again.

Hundreds of these American horses were bought from the English when the first forces from the United States landed. The drivers were constantly in trouble, and, at first couldn't understand the reason.

"I had a team out during a review," said one driver, "and couldn't make 'em budge. I yelled 'git-up' and everything else at 'em, and they just sort of looked aroun' like they thought I was foolish. Then I remembered that I heard a frog yell 'alley' at his horses. I yelled 'alley,' and away they went."

The horses now are a good deal like the soldier. They'll respond to either French or English commands.

Mad Cat Bites Boy

Dublin, Ga., July 20.—(I. N. S.)—A cat affected with rabies attacked two sons of J. W. Russell, biting them on the arms and hands. They have been given Pasteur treatment.

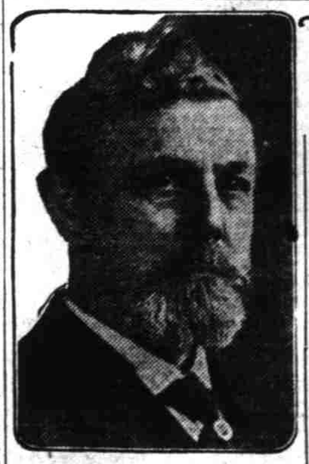
"DR. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin has proved more satisfactory than any other laxative I have ever used. The other members of my family also use it and we recommend it highly."

(From a letter to Dr. Caldwell written by Mr. Charles Fenske, 5005 N. 5th Street, Philadelphia, Pa.)

Dr. Caldwell's
Syrup Pepsin
The Perfect Laxative

Sold by Druggists Everywhere
50 cts. (Two Sizes) $1.00

A combination of simple laxative herbs with pepsin that acts in an easy, natural way, and is as safe for children as it is positively effective on the strongest constitution. A trial bottle can be obtained free of charge by writing to Dr. W. B. Caldwell, 458 Washington Street, Monticello, Illinois.



The DOCTOR'S ADVICE
by Dr. Lewis Baker

The questions answered below are general in character, the symptoms or diseases are given and the answers will apply in any case of similar nature.

Those wishing further advice, free, may address Dr. Lewis Baker, College bldg., College-Ellwood streets, Dayton, Ohio, enclosing self addressed stamped envelope for reply. Full name and address must be given, but only initials or fictitious names will be used in my answers. The prescriptions can be filled at any well stocked drug store. Any druggist can order of wholesaler.

"Nerves" writes: "Is it possible to find a medicine which by its tonic or nutritive powers will bring the glow of health and ambition back to a man who has everything in the world but health and happiness? I am dull, forgetful, despondent, weak, trembling, short of breath and suffer more or less with pain in spine and back of head."

Answer: Your condition indicates the need of a strong, harmless tonic nutritive to restore nerve equilibrium, which in turn fortifies and strengthens the organs of nutrition, thus vitalizing the blood and promoting new cell and tissue to take care of the waste forces. Three-grain cadomene tablets, packed in sealed tubes with full directions, are recommended in all such cases.

* * *

Mrs. L. O. writes: "My husband is surely afflicted with some kidney disease. He has become weak and suffers with headache and pains in his back and groins. Pains are like rheumatism. His ankles swell and his feet seem to be tired all the time. Some days he has chills and no appetite. Please prescribe."

Answer: The symptoms indicate derangement of kidneys and should not be neglected. I would advise balmwort tablets, a compound well suited to such cases. Obtain in sealed tubes with directions for home use.

* * *

Adela writes: "My hair is coming out, my scalp itches and dandruff is much annoying, and I want something to cure these conditions."

Answer: For hair and scalp troubles I have never found anything to equal the beneficial results of a thorough treatment of plain yellow minyol. It is cooling, cleansing and invigorating, and thousands now use it regularly as a hair and scalp tonic.

* * *

S. E. writes: "Two years ago I used your great prescription for kidney trouble, and it wholly overcame the trouble. I want medicine now for constipation and impure blood, for I am a sight with pimples that make big, lumpy sores."

Answer. I would advise the taking of three-grain sulpherb tablets (not sulphur) for several months to purify the system.

* * *

J. E. M. asks: "Can I safely reduce my weight, and how?"

Answer: Go to a well stocked druggist and get five-grain arbolone tablets in sealed tube with complete directions. Take as directed, and you should soon feel the relief you desire. Many of my patients report quick results without any harmful action whatever.

NOTE: For many years Dr. Baker has been giving free advice and prescriptions to millions of people through the press columns, and doubtless has helped in relieving illness and distress more than any single individual in the world's history. Thousands have written him expressions of gratitude and confidence similar to the following:

Dr. Lewis Baker, Dear Sir—I am glad I was recommended to your prescription for medicine. I was pretty well run down, nervous and loss of ambition; felt tired all the time; could not sleep, loss of appetite, felt weak and trembled from weakness. I find three-grain Cadomene Tablets are helping me very much. I was writing to my sister about my run-down condition and she advised me to take your prescription of medicine, for she was as bad as I was and the Cadomene built her nerves up and also restored her health. I am more than thankful, etc. Yours truly,

GEORGE SCHILLO,
1006 Pear Ave.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

(Adv.)