A CURIOUS MEAT-PRESERVATIVE.

BY ALFRED C. CHAPMAN, F.I.C.

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SOME time ago I received for analysis an antiseptic solution intended for the preservation of meat. The liquid, which was colourless, possessed a mixed odour of sulphurous and benzoic acids, and proved on examination to have a somewhat remarkable composition. The analysis, which was only qualitative, revealed the presence of the following substances: aluminium sulphate, sodium chloride, sodium nitrate, sulphurous acid, chloral hydrate, benzoic acid, and a small quantity of iodine, apparently existing as hydriodic acid. The alum was evidently intended to exert its astringent effect upon the fibre of the meat, whilst the remaining constituents (with the exception, perhaps, of the chloral) are, of course, well known to be possessed of marked preservative and antiseptic properties. Both the chloral and the benzoic acid would doubtless be volatilized during the cooking of the meat, and

this fact probably suggested the use of benzoic instead of the more active salicylic acid. In the course of my practice I had never before encountered chloral hydrate as a constituent of a food-preservative, and I thought that a short note calling attention to its use for such a purpose might not prove uninteresting to the members of this Society.

DISCUSSION.

DR. RIDEAL said that preservatives of this kind were almost invariably of French origin. He had met with several, the composition of which was similar in character to that of Mr. Chapman's sample. Chloral hydrate was present in some, but not in all. The main idea of the manufacturers of such mixtures seemed to be to use a large number of different ingredients, apparently with a view to baffling analysts.