Finding, by experiment, that diluted alcohol extracts the virtues of veratrum viride, I have chosen it as the proper menstruum for making a fluid extract, and propose the following formula: Take of veratrum viride, bruised, ℥ xvi. ; diluted alcohol, q. s. ; alcohol deodorized, ℥vi. Macerate the root in diluted alcohol for forty-eight hours, occasionally stirring or loosening up the mass. Transfer to a displacement apparatus, and allow diluted alcohol to run through until the resulting tincture shows by the absence of color, taste and smell, that the strength is exhausted. Evaporate the tincture carefully in a water bath, beginning with the weaker portions first, until the whole measures ten ounces. Lastly, add the alcohol, taking care to re-dissolve any resinous precipitate which may have formed. Should the operator wish the extract sweetened, add, previously to evaporation, three ounces of refined sugar.

As thus prepared, fluid extract of veratrum viride is of a dark brandy color, possessing a peculiar flavor of the root. Each drop is equivalent to a grain of the root. The dose of this preparation, as a sedative, is one drop, to be cautiously increased. Although forming an emulsion with water, showing the presence of resin, it may be given in mixture with it, or with milk, which forms for it an excellent vehicle. I send a sample of the fluid extract here described.

Very respectfully,

HENRY THAYER, M.D.

Cambridge, August 16th, 1858.

FATAL POISONING FROM EATING TOADSTOOLS.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

BY J. M. HARLOW, M.D.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—If you regard the following case of sufficient interest to the medical profession to merit a place in your JOURNAL, you are at liberty to make such use of it as you deem best. The history of the case is briefly as follows.

The family of Mr. James Musgrave, an Englishman, consisting of himself, his wife, and two children (a boy aged 10 years, and a girl aged 7), were poisoned on the evening of Tuesday, the 27th ult., by eating fried mushrooms. The result was the death of the two children, and decided symptoms of poisoning in the parents. It appears that the family had been in the habit of eating mushrooms in England, and were not aware that there were many poisonous varieties of the plant. The mother states that she cooked as many as fourteen of them, and that some of them were quite as large as the top of a saucer, and that the most of them were eaten, the children partaking very freely. They were eaten at supper, on Tuesday evening. None of the family experienced any inconvenience in consequence, until some time in the morning of Wednesday, the 28th, when the girl complained of a pain in the occipital region, with dizziness and nausea, and vomited frequently

during the day, but she kept about the house most of the day and passed a tolerable night. Up to this time the other members of the family had not experienced much uneasiness of any kind, excepting some vertigo.

On Thursday, the 29th, all the symptoms before mentioned appeared in an increased degree, to which were added purging, excessive thirst, pain in the stomach and bowels, along the spinal column and in the ankles, with clonic spasms and occasional delirium, incoherent talking and muttering. The little sufferer passed a disturbed night, with, so far as I can learn, about the same symptoms constantly increasing in degree, having lucid intervals and intervals of rest. Toward morning, in the wildness of her delirium, she rose from her bed and walked into the garden. At length, worn out with suffering, she sank into a profound coma, and expired at 1 o'clock on Friday afternoon. No physician was called until Friday forenoon, when Dr. Rhodes, of this city, was invited to see her, but only arrived at the bedside of the unfortunate girl to witness the closing scene.

On Thursday, the father and the boy began to complain. He was obliged to leave his work because of dizziness, and said he felt like an intoxicated person. He vomited, once or twice during the day, had some diarrhoea, and complained of pain in the back of the head, and in the ankles. The mother was similarly affected on Friday morning, but both father and mother, being so interested in the state of the children, thought little of their own condition so long as they were so fully occupied. The boy began to purge on Thursday afternoon, and vomited occasionally during the night, the purging increasing very much on Friday. Dr. Rhodes was requested to examine him. He gave him an emetic of antimon. et potass. tart., which operated freely. The emetic was followed by a cathartic. The boy exhibited nearly the same train of symptoms as the girl from this time until he died—extreme restlessness, thirst, spasms, vomiting, purging and wild delirium. Some time during the latter part of the night Dr. R. gave him a portion of morphia to quiet the restlessness, which was all I was able to learn in regard to the treatment or the progress of the case up to Saturday morning.

The preceding history, imperfect as it is, is all I could obtain from careful inquiries of both the attending physician and the family. At 9½ o'clock, A.M., of Saturday, the 31st, I was requested to visit the afflicted family in consultation with the attending physician. I found the patient in the following apparently hopeless condition. Decubitus upon the back, inclined to left side; skin about the mouth, face, head and neck of a slightly livid hue; the whole surface of the body of normal temperature; patient entirely unconscious; respiration stertorous, and ten per minute; pupil contracted, but the globe of the eye not fixed; tongue dry and swollen; the surface covered with inflamed patches; spasmodic

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jerking of the muscles of the extremities, and tonic contraction of the dorsal and lumbar muscles, amounting to decided opisthotonos; abdomen tympanitic; pulse 110 and irregular. Prognosis, unfavorable. Advised, that if proper to do anything in such an extremity, stimulants should be given internally, and the most powerful counter-irritants applied along the spine and over the stomach and abdomen—brandy and milk, by the mouth and by enema, and sulphuric ether; all of which were assiduously applied, but without any good effect whatever, the patient expiring at a few minutes before noon, or in two hours after I saw him.

In conclusion allow me to make one or two remarks. I have little doubt that both these children might have been saved, had rational medical treatment been resorted to sufficiently early. Though there is no antidote that I am aware of, still the indications were sufficiently plain for any one to follow. Probably they used several varieties of the fungi. The specimen shown me by the father, and said to be like those used, resembles the *Agaricus Campestris*, which is said to be innocuous, but I believe it belongs to the section *Amanita*. It is somewhat singular that a poison capable of producing such fatal effects should not manifest itself sooner. The father and mother have both recovered, being but slightly affected. Another singular fact in regard to this genus of plants is, that the edible varieties become poisonous when they grow in low moist situations. It appears that the plant is a powerful irritant and acro-narcotic, and when used in a moderate degree is capable of producing those delightful impressions upon the nervous system so much courted by the debauchee. Pereira informs us that some of the inhabitants of North Eastern Asia use the fungi for producing intoxication, and that the fit of debauch is often prolonged by the subject of it drinking his urine, in a few hours after eating the plant. Also, that the intoxication can be transmitted through five individuals, the second drinking the urine of the first, the third that of the second, and so on.

Stillwater, Minnesota, August 7th, 1858.

BELLADONNA IN ARRESTING THE SECRETION OF MILK.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

MESSRS. EDITORS,—In the number of your JOURNAL for August 5, I noticed two communications upon the efficacy of the extract of belladonna in arresting the lacteal secretion, which hardly seem to present much positive proof—or at least *such* proof as is usually requisite to establish the efficacy of any drug.

Several months ago, I saw the suggestion in your JOURNAL, and since that time have used the extract of belladonna in four cases; in the first three it gave satisfactory results, but they were mild ones, and there was no reason to suppose that the secretion would