

The writer's reason for so thinking is this: Of the six cases reported, only two of them were diagnosed properly before death; and were it not that the real trouble was revealed by an autopsy, the truth would never have been known in four of them.

The writer wishes to call your attention to the following observations: 1. In none of his cases was the disease primary and uncomplicated. 2. The heart lesions were not always associated with heart murmur. 3. The temperature and many of the symptoms are common with those of typhoid fever. 4. In none of the writer's cases did the temperature rise above 104°. It was lower in the morning, higher in the evening. 5. Meningitis almost always present. 6. Two cases complicated with tuberculosis, one with pneumonia, one with pleurisy, one with hypertrophy of heart, and the other not examined sufficiently to be able to tell. 7. Treatment seemed to have no particular effect, excepting hypnotics. Fowler's solution of arsenious acid, quinine and bichloride of mercury were tried. 8. The heart was examined and cultures made in three of the most malignant cases for microorganisms; none were ever found. The writer still inclines to the belief that the disease has for its cause the infection of some germ.

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THE USE OF VERATRUM VIRIDE IN THE TREATMENT OF DISEASES.

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I beg leave to introduce to the notice of the Section a few remarks upon the properties and uses of the veratrum viride. We all know of its remarkable properties in reducing the frequency of the pulse. This is a property which renders it particularly valuable in diseases, and for which it has been prescribed in fevers, with extreme rapidity of circulation, and in inflammatory affections of the lungs. It diminishes the pulsations of the heart and arteries twenty or thirty strokes in a few hours, simply by its action upon the brain and nervous system. Its powers, I am induced to think from some trials with it, will be found of more value in chronic affections, and as little has been stated of its application to these cases, I shall be excused for calling your attention to some of these diseases, in which, after a moderate experience, I am disposed to think it will prove a valuable agent. These are, first, affections of the head, and all the kindred complaints connected with undue excitement of this organ. These diseases are exhibited in every variety of form, from dulness of the faculties, with heaviness, stupor or oppression, to those more exalted

conditions of the same organ, as manifested in extreme nervousness, keen sensibility, and finally, perverted reason. These various grades of excitement are connected with undue vascular action, and this again with organic structure. Any article which operates so efficiently upon the vascular system, must have its influences first exerted upon the seat and centre of all the vital operations of the body, and it is to sedation, then, that we are to ascribe its beneficial effects in the diseases I am about to bring to your notice.

The simplest disorders of the head in which its good effects are manifested, is in vascular fulness of this organ, particularly manifested in the advanced periods of life. The symptoms following upon this state of the brain, and giddiness, dulness of the mental faculties, constant headache, dimness or darkness of vision, the movements of the body being much circumscribed. For the removal of these symptoms I have found the tincture, largely diluted with water, and taken at regular intervals during the day, very effectual. The form of administration is the following: *R.* Tinct. verat. vir., gtt. xxv; aqua, ℥ vi; ℞. The dose is ℥ ij to ℥ iv every two or three hours until relief is obtained. The doses operate favorably, often without any sensible evacuation, sometimes only to give regularity to the bowels. The next class of cases are those connected with a greater degree of vascular action, and the first that I shall bring to your notice is epilepsy, and unconnected with any mechanical derangement, but a nervous affection, as when it is brought on by grief or mental disappointment.

In a case of this nature, the same formula for its administration as already mentioned has been efficacious in diminishing the frequency of the paroxysms, and of rendering them milder. From a daily recurrence, they have been suspended for a week; and from a violence in their action, attended with convulsive contraction, they have been reduced to simple unconsciousness, of short duration. Upon their recurrence there is no foaming at the mouth, nor is the patient thrown down, but the paroxysm occurs while standing, and rapidly exhausts itself. The only sensible effects, after a month's use of the article, was to impair the appetite, and to give regularity in the operation of the bowels. I prefer presenting the results of this article in a condensed form, rather than in detail.

Another class of diseases of the same organ is that characterized by extreme nervousness, or such exaltation of nervous excitement as borders on mania. We recognize in such subjects extreme vivacity, with alternate dejection of spirits, cephalalgia, frebricula, impaired digestion, coldness of the extremities, sallow complexion, subjects as described seem to be on the verge of insanity, and, without proper care, pass rapidly into all its wildness and extravagances. Tem-

perance alone holds the reins, and keeps the system from rushing headlong on destruction. With this, so valuable a mentor, our medicine strongly coöperates, and, in a case from which my description was drawn, was found highly useful in repressing exuberances and extravagances of feeling and conduct, which gave to those about the patient the impression of madness approaching, while it calmed and relieved the bodily indispositions. The same form of administration was pursued as in the preceding.

In one other form of disease, of a cerebro-spinal character, viz.: crural neuralgia of the lower extremities, the virtues of this article have been tested. This disease has the misnomer, rheumatism, too frequently applied to it, which it too often resembles in its worst features; and without some suitable and reasonable remedy, the patient is doomed, I might say, to a life of confinement and of suffering. I will not detain you by referring to its causes; in general terms, it is produced by whatever gives rise to inflammation of the spinal column, particularly about the lumbar portion, as lifting heavy weights. After an extensive employment of many articles, I have derived almost immediate relief from the veratrum, the pains in the limbs being greatly mitigated, the uneasiness of the back relieved, the power of locomotion regained in a very short time after commencing the use of it.

Another form of disease of rather different character, but in which, from its reputed operation, it may be considered useful, is in cancerous affections. An article which, from its sedative influence upon the human system, could reduce the pulsations of the heart and arteries twenty, thirty or forty strokes in the minute, in the course of sixteen or eighteen hours, must be considered a useful agent in this disease, attended, as it is, with an exalted state of nervous sensibilities. It was a very suitable subject for experiment, and without any authority, but with an eye to its reputed qualities, I considered that it might be advantageously resorted to. Accordingly, in a case of carcinoma uteri, where the sufferings of the patient were of the usual intense character, I have succeeded in affording very great relief, and this without any of the narcotism induced by the preparations of opium. A great change has been brought about in the sufferings and condition of the patient, and from many painful hours by day and sleepless ones by night, she has come to enjoy comparative ease, the paroxysms of pain being less frequently renewed, and no night passing without quiet sleep of from four to six hours. The form of administration is that already detailed: Tinct. verat. virid., gtt. xxv or xxx; aqua, ʒvj; dose, ʒss, taken every two or three hours. This quantity was given daily, without producing any great uneasiness of stomach; and when, from long use, its powers began to subside,

they have been sustained by the addition of ʒj to ʒjss of laudanum to the mixture, and this quantity taken in the twenty-four hours. By this compound unwonted energy has been given to the mixture, an effect too great from the amount of laudanum added, so much so, that for the past forty-eight hours comparative tranquility has prevailed, and many hours of sleep obtained. In a disease of such a character, any addition which can be made to our resources in counteracting its malignant disposition, is a duty we owe to our patients, and a great relief to the physician; and it is from the satisfaction I have felt from this single trial that I have been induced (thus precipitately, as may be thought) to proclaim its efficacy. To alleviate pain is as much the province of the physician as to cure disease; and since in many it is all the relief we can aim at, and fate decrees that we must die, it is no less the duty of the physician to soothe and soften the horrors of its approach, and let the passage at least be easy and serene.

These are the few diseases in which I have tested its operation, and they are of a different character from any in which it has been recommended. I may be only on the threshold of inquiry, and it is with a view to elicit from others more information, or a confirmation of my statements, that I have been induced, rather hurriedly, to bring them to the notice of the Association. I have consumed, in these experiments, between two and three ounces of the tincture, and have not known any unpleasant effects produced from the use of it. From my present experience and impression, I am disposed to think that it will always occupy a prominent position in the materia medica. As a local application I have used the white hellebore in scabies, herpes, and kindred affections. I must be excused recording its efficacy in removing a fungous growth from the inner part of the arm, at the elbow-joint, of a warty character, of the size of a hickory nut, which had existed twenty-five years. The patient was of very advanced age, bordering on ninety years; was much annoyed at this morbid growth, not only from the size of the tumor, but from its offensive odor; the profuse discharge irritating the adjacent skin, the necessity of frequent dressing and cleansing (but for her age and extreme aversion to the knife, excision would have been practiced). This morbid growth, after the trial of many articles, was removed by being powdered, several times a day, with the root of the white hellebore. Its effect was to cause the immediate cessation of the discharge, and a gradual exfoliation, I may say, from the whole surface of the tumor, until it was finally entirely removed. To have removed in a short time, by such an application, what the knife seemed only capable of accomplishing, seemed a triumph worthy of record, and must plead my apology for its introduction.