

ing the bandage, where possible, with safety pins. The upper border need not be drawn very tightly, to prevent its interfering with respiration.

29. If there is any tendency to relaxation on the part of the uterus, a good firm pad may with great advantage be applied over it, beneath the binder.

30. Examine your patient's pulse; if it remains full and firm at 80 beats the minute all is well. If it passes beyond a hundred there is always cause for anxiety and watchfulness.

31. Again examine the portion of cord attached to the child, to be assured that there is no bleeding therefrom. See, also, that the piece of linen in which it is to be wrapped has been well singed at the edges which are to be in immediate contact with the cord.

32. The application of the infant to the breast as soon as dressed, is a safe measure for the mother, tending to prevent hemorrhage.

33. Do not leave the house for an hour after delivery has been effected, and during that time watch carefully the amount of discharge, and the state of contraction on the part of the womb.

34. A thorough acquaintance with the minutiae of treatment necessary in dealing with ordinary cases, makes it a matter of comparative ease when called upon to treat those which are graver in their nature.—*Med. Press and Cir.*

VERATRUM VIRIDE.

By C. J. RADEMAKER, M.D.

American hellebore is generally considered by the profession as a powerful vegetable poison; but having never heard of a case of fatal poisoning by this drug, and as I am in the habit of using this medicine a great deal in my practice, I concluded to make a series

of experiments with it upon the lower animals, both in regard to its physiological and poisonous properties. American hellebore, when given to the lower animals, whether given in the form of a saturated tincture or the alkaloid itself in small doses, produces the following effects: First, a great increase of saliva and flow of tears, accompanied with an incessant cough, the animal at the same time dancing around the room. If now the dose is increased, either by the mouth or by hypodermic injection, vomiting sets in rapidly, the pupils become dilated, accompanied by great muscular relaxation, so that the animal is unable to walk; but at no time have I noticed tonic spasms and stiffness of the limbs, even when the drug had been given in enormous doses. Upon the circulation it has a powerful sedative effect; when given in small doses it diminishes the pulse, without producing any unpleasant symptoms. But if the medicine is now increased largely, it brings the heart down to about twenty-five beats per minute, accompanied by all the symptoms given above; but in no instance could I give a small dog enough of the alkaloid (*veratria*) to kill him.

One small dog I gave ten grains of *veratria* and then placed him under the influence of chloroform, and made a careful vivisection, so that part of the heart was exposed, which I could see and feel beating tumultuously at about twenty or twenty-five beats per minute; but after he came out of the stupor of chloroform he got up and looked about him, apparently thinking that nothing had happened; so I struck him on the head with an axe and killed him.

The stomach of this dog was taken out and found highly injected with blood over the entire mucous surface. The stomach was submitted to analysis,

and three grains of veratria found ; consequently five grains must have been absorbed, allowing two grains for loss, which is large.

From the above it will be seen that veratrum can not be considered a powerful poison. As for narcotic properties, it possesses none ; and it can only be classed with the irritant poisons. Of course, where given in very large doses, it would produce gastro-enteritis and probably death.

Taylor, in his Treatise on Poisons, speaks of the irritant properties of black and white hellebore, but says nothing in regard to veratrum viride. In a case reported by Morgagni, (Taylor's Treatise), a half dram of the aqueous extract of black hellebore killed a man aged fifty years in eight hours. The symptoms were pain in the abdomen and vomiting. After death the whole alimentary canal was found inflamed. In one instance twenty grains of the white hellebore caused death in three hours (Taylor's Treatise). Death was preceded by vomiting of bloody mucus and cold sweats. A physician prescribed medicinally one grain of veratria, divided into fifty pills, and three were to be taken at a dose (equivalent to one sixteenth of a grain), which, according to Taylor, came very near killing her. But I have not seen such results with the American hellebore on the lower animals. Medicinally I have not prescribed it in large doses, but I am satisfied that one-sixteenth of a grain of veratria will produce no poisonous effects.

THERAPEUTIC USE.

Veratrum viride is an excellent remedy in pneumonia of children, for it can be given in such a way that the child is not aware that it is taking medicine. The form in which I give it to children

is the following : R Liq. potas. citratis, oz. j ; tinct. veratri viridis, gtt. ii to iv or vj, according to the age of the child ; a teaspoonful of the mixture to be given every two hours. This dose of course can be increased if necessary, but in a very young child I find one quarter of a drop sufficient to reduce the heart's action. In pneumonia of adults I give four to eight drops of the tincture every two hours until the pulse is reduced. I then order it to be given every four or six hours. The tincture I use is (Norwood's) made by macerating eight ounces of the rhizome to one pint of alcohol. The other treatment, such as poultices, food, and Dover's Powder for pain and rest, is not neglected, and complications of any kind are met with proper remedies. In croupous pneumonia I always use quinine in large doses, as recommended by Juergensen. (See Ziemssen's Practice.)

In scarlatina I have found this an excellent remedy to reduce the pulse, always using it in conjunction with a bath at a temperature of 80 or 85 deg., and allowing the child to remain in it from one-half to three-quarters of an hour. This bath I use more for its effect upon the renal organs and skin than the effect it would produce upon the pulse and temperature.

During this last epidemic I treated about ninety cases of scarlet fever, out of which I lost but five. Whether this was owing to my treatment or not, I am unable to say, but will leave that to the judgment of the profession.

In dentition of children with high fever and bounding pulse, especially in those phlegmatic children that are so liable to be taken with cerebral meningitis, the veratrum, in combination with

potas. bromidum, is the remedy *par excellence*.

In acute rheumatism this remedy is not less efficacious, sufficient quantity being given to reduce the pulse. In this disease it may be given in combination with opium or morphia, which ease pain, while the sedative remedy reduces the excitement. It may also be combined with the alkalies and colchicum, as in the following mixture :

R. Potas bicarb.....dr. iij.
 Vin. colchi. sem.....oz. ss.
 Tinct. veratri viridisgtt. 60.
 Aqua destil.....oz. vi.

M. ft. sol. Sig. Tablespoonful every two or three hours.

In typhoid and other low forms of fever, and in organic disease of the heart where it becomes necessary to repress the circulation, the veratrum will be found of great benefit.

In conclusion, I would say that veratria may be considered a powerful irritant poison, but at the same time death is not likely to be produced by its action upon the cerebro-spinal system or upon the heart. If death occur after its administration, it is probably the sequence of inflammation of the stomach and bowels.—*Louisville Medical News*,

OBSTETRIC MEMORANDA.

This case may be given in brief detail. Mrs. W—, æt. 32, seventh pregnancy at full term ; previous labors prolonged and difficult, pains very severe and prostrating. For some months before delivery, the lower extremities were much swollen with dropsical effusion, and there was general œdema of the body and face especially about the eyes. She was also troubled with severe bronchitis, for which I treated her with good effect during the last three weeks preceding delivery.

She was in a very despondent condition, fearing the worst. The heart's action was very weak.

I was called to her at 6:10 P. M. She had had strong and regular labor pains, from about 1 P. M., and suffered from sharp, premonitory ones, from the preceding evening. On examination, I found the pelvic cavity roomy, the passages cool and moist, the rectum empty, the patient passing water freely, the pains strong, regular, and succeeding one another at rapid intervals. The head was presenting, the waters were unbroken, and the "os" was dilated to something less than the size of shilling ; its edges were very thin, hard, sharp, resisting and undilatable. I at once gave a dose of chloral, and followed up with two others, at intervals of twenty minutes. I gave in all sixty grains. Its good effects were soon apparent.

These effects were, however, even more marked, as the progress of the case was very rapid. She enjoyed the same quiet deep sleep during the intervals between the pains, and felt herself greatly refreshed. The pains themselves were not really so intense, although the contractions were very strong. The child was born at 8:20 P. M., two hours after the administration of the first dose of chloral. It was a male of very large size. The anterior lip of the uterus got caught between the symphysis pubis and child's head. I had to push it up, and keep it there until the latter had descended sufficiently into the cavity of the pelvis, to prevent of its prolapse. The pulse remained at 84 beats to the minute. The post-partum contraction of the womb was good, expelling the placenta at the end of ten minutes, unaided by pressure. There was no post-partum hemorrhage. The patient felt most grateful, asserting