

into the vagina, and after a slow but steady effort, the fundus was raised above the brim, and the uterus righted. I have seen this patient repeatedly since, and she has had no more return of the displacement.—*Medical Times*, Oct., 4, 1844, p 27.

### TREATMENT OF PRURITUS VULVÆ.

Having been a great many times consulted for relief of pruritus vulvæ, and most frequently in pregnant women, I have rarely had occasion to order anything more than the following formula, viz.—

R. Sodæ borat. ʒss.; morphinæ sulphat. gr. vj.; aq. rosar destillat. ʒviij. M.F. sec. art.

I directed the person to apply it thrice a day to the affected parts by means of a bit of sponge, or a piece of linen, taking the precaution first to wash the surfaces with tepid water and soap, and to dry them before applying the lotion. I can confidently recommend the prescription as suitable in most of the cases of this most annoying malady.—*Dr. Meigs—Medical Gazette*, Sep. 12, 1845, p. 851.

## CHEMISTRY, MATERIA MEDICA, AND PHARMACY.

### THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES OF VERATRINE AND STRYCHNINE.

Dr. F. A. Gebhard, of Moscow, has published an interesting paper on Veratrine studied comparatively with Strychnine, in Dr. Szerlecki's *Zeitschrift für Therapie und Pharmakodynamik*. An abstract of its contents is presented in the following summary:—

The experiments of Magendie and Andral prove the incredible rapidity with which strychnine is absorbed; those of Verviere and Segalas show that it may be actually detected in the blood, which is changed by its admixture with it; and post-mortem examinations disclose marked bloody infiltrations, turgidness of the veins, apoplexy, congestion, and even appearances of inflammation. Its primary effects, in small doses, are irritating and exciting; it appearing, at the same time, by its bitter principle, to improve the digestion, and unquestionably, in certain kinds of chronic diarrhœa, to be very useful. Yet the continued employment of strychnine in small doses, or even its administration in larger ones from the commencement, appears to cause, in some unknown manner, such a change in the blood as to result unexpectedly and suddenly in a powerful reaction on the nervous system, manifested by convulsions, tetanus, exhaustion, paralysis and death. In paralysis of the motor nerves, it has often been of great advantage, without having any effect upon any organ of secretion or of excretion; but in neuralgia, in which M. G. formerly employed it internally and externally, it gives no relief; while in many other diseases, as cramps and convulsions, it has been employed without success. Under these circumstances, and in view of the dangerous effects it often produces, M. G. thinks that some other remedy should be sought for even in those cases in which it has proved advantageous. The remedy which he proposes to substitute is veratrine. Of this he speaks, in substance, as follows:—In small doses, administered internally, veratrine occasions peculiar pricking, stinging sensations, like those of electricity, in the extremities, shoulders, &c., followed by composing effects upon the portions of nerves affected with neuralgia, and somewhat after, with nausea, salivation, vomiting, flow of urine and diarrhœa. It ought also to favour the menstrual evacuation. Rubbed in externally, peculiar sensations of the skin are also excited by it, which reach, by means of the reflex action, upon other nerves under the influence of the spinal cord. M. G. does not believe that veratrine acts first through the blood, but, it appears to him, by the immediate specific irritations from the part to which it is applied,

at one time by reflex action through the spinal marrow, at another by irradiation and the laws of contiguity, without reference to the relation of tissue and function, and to the known connection between nerves and blood-vessels, to cause an uniform excitement and distribution of the nervous powers, and thus to remove the symptoms of pain and paralysis—as we see after rubbing it in upon the back or over the region of the heart, the strongest nervous palpitations, pain, convulsive cough, and nervous pains of all kinds allayed; and in the same manner, absorption (in cases of dropsy) favoured, and in many cases the urine evidently increased.

The indications for its employment are pain, cramp effusion and paralysis, the result either of effusion or of exhaustion. The chief contra-indications are, increased activity of the circulation, fever, inflammations in general. Against its internal administration are, *gastricismus* and organic disease of the intestinal canal. A great degree of torpor and of weakness does not prevent its employment, as it animates, especially when rubbed in, the sunken and irregular nervous action by the excitement it produces, without directly affecting the blood, in consequence of which strychnine is so dangerous. Care must be taken, however, not to employ it externally in marked inflammatory turgescence of the skin, and especially in certain erysipelatous, herpetic dispositions, &c., which so often manifest themselves in many dyscrasias.

Dr. G. employs veratrine internally in doses of the sixteenth of a grain twice a day, increasing it gradually, according to the susceptibility, the early or late occurrence of nausea or diarrhœa, to four pills and over. Externally, he prescribes 5-20 grains of it to be rubbed up with an ounce of lard. As, however, it is very expensive, and we can never reckon upon its acting very rapidly, he orders generally half to one grain of veratrine to ten to fifteen grains of lard, which may be used in two or three applications, and repeated if necessary. He always uses it with lard in children, and in women with delicate skins, or after recent inflammatory rheumatism, in which we are never sure, if it will, the part is in condition to bear it, even though fever and inflammation appear to be removed. Riecke recommends the veratrine to be dissolved in alcohol, and then mixed with the lard—a practice which M. G. approves of. In chronic cases, on the other hand, and when there is a torpid condition of the skin, M. G. employs a spirituous embrocation, which, indeed, he found effectual in much weaker doses of from 2-10 grains to the ounce. The rubbing in should be continued, according to the condition, ten to fifteen minutes, and until a pricking and burning sensation is experienced.

M. Gebhard has made advantageous use of this remedy in rheumatism, both acute and chronic—in the former, when after the subsiding of the fever, there remain gastric derangements and local pains which will not yield to the usual treatment, and in the latter, after long perseverance and when there is no alteration of structure. Since 1839, says M. G., I have treated about sixty cases of rheumatism of all kinds, among which only four did not experience a radical cure; and in these marked enlargements and ankylosis had occurred, and the patients, partly from impatience and partly from fear of the expensive medicine, sought other assistance. In all the other cases, there resulted partly an entire cure of the most unpromising cases, partly decided relief. I have never employed veratrine internally in rheumatism, only externally. For the most part, I have abstained from all internal remedies: in some cases only assisting the cure by means of colchicum, iodine—especially the latter, in combination with veratrine, in chronic swellings of the joints without pain, in which this treatment was very serviceable. In neuralgia, M. G. sustains the opinion of Turnbull, that veratrine is especially useful in those cases in which the pain is not fixed in any one point,