

gives ease and sleep to the patient, while it in no way interferes with the natural play of the uterine muscles—labor quietly proceeding under its influence. It is easier of administration than chloroform or sulphuric ether, much safer, and in most cases as efficient. Where there is a great gastric irritability, its use would seem to be contra-indicated.

Hypodermic injections of morphia have a speedy and reliable influence in suspending spasm and contraction of uterine muscles. They put a lock upon muscular action by rendering unconscious the muscular nervous sense, and thereby enable the muscles to recuperate their wasted energies. Morphia may be given *per orem* for the same purpose; but where speedy action is desired, or where there is gastric disturbance, the hypodermic method is preferable.

Opium has the same action as its alkaloid, morphia, but the latter is preferable on account of its smaller dose, and its more certain and speedy action.

Agents of the fourth Class.—Rupture of the membranes, where there is a deficiency of pressure against the os, constitutes a measure of great value—it enables the presenting part to engage advantageously, and furnishes leverage to bring into play the third factor of dilatation. This means may also operate upon the inherent expansile power of muscles of the cervix by letting down the presenting part against it to produce excitation of the nervi-motor function.

Stimulants and tonics, which, through the blood, give tone and vigor to all parts of the system, as alcoholic liquors, extract of meat, ammonia, quinia, and strychnia (operating through the spinal nervous system), are all invaluable remedies in inertia uteri. They give new life to the dormant muscles, and enable them to make the traction needed, to produce pressure, and to stimulate the nervous influence—all the factors in the process of dilatation.

Galvanism has been alluded to as an agent of the first class. By its action upon the nervous influence it may combine all the agencies entering into the expansion of the os uteri. The current should be applied by one pole to the external surface of the os, while the other is placed over the abdomen in front of the uterus, and gradually swept around to the spine, over the sacrum and lumbar vertebrae.

Ergot of rye has a well-settled power of stimulating contractions. Its mode of action, after much discussion, is not well ascertained. It may be administered by the mouth in any of the several ways in which it is prepared.

Tartar emetic, given in minute doses, often exerts a beneficial effect in relaxing rigidity of the os. Its physiological properties in this connection are not well understood.

ON THE USE OF THE PULVIS GLYCYRRHIZÆ COMPOSITUS, A LAXATIVE PREPARATION OF THE PRUSSIAN PHARMACOPŒIA.

BY DAVID PAGE, M.B., MDIN. Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmoreland.

THE want of a mild but effective aperient, of convenient form, and without any of the disagreeable

concomitants of most preparations of this class, frequently confronts the physician when he casts about him to meet a case of simple constipation with what he cannot readily discover, a pleasant remedy. "Cite, tute, et jucunde," may be said, I think, of the way in which the elegant preparation under consideration acts.

About two years ago I first became acquainted with the compound liquorice powder through Dr. J. Warburton, Begbie, and, since then, I have, I may say, daily tested its efficacy as an excellent laxative medicine.

The majority of cases of constipation arise from simple or functional derangement, and perhaps in all of these a loss of power or atony of the colon is the faulty source.

In the aged, this condition is properly coincident with the gradual cessation of activity generally in the bodily functions; but in the young, more avoidable or accidental causes are at work, such as sedentary habits, irregularity, debility from other illnesses, and the like.

With regard to other cases of constipation, which can be traced to a deranged state of the upper intestine, catarrhal conditions are most frequently observed, and I have met with no more inveterate instances of this sort than those occurring in patients whose rule of life seemed to embrace the persistent use of the numberless quack purgative nostrums.

I may with truth remark, in passing, that, in England at least, more disorders of the primæ viæ come under the eye of the physician from this one cause than from all the natural and inimical agencies put together. (1)

For the treatment of simple constipation resulting from atony of the bowel, the compound liquorice powder is admirably adapted. Whether in simple uncomplicated torpor of the intestines, or in constipation accompanying temporary gastric disorder, the powder, alone or auxiliary to appropriate remedies, is preferable to other preparations of its class. In the former, our object is rather to call into play the peristaltic action of the intestine than to deplete by serous transudation from its walls, and, in the latter especially, no prudent practitioner would run the risk of aggravating the disordered stomach by the exhibition of purgatives possessed of irritant or drastic properties. The compound liquorice powder is composed of the following constituents, so prepared as to form when incorporated an almost impalpable powder:—Senna leaves, $\frac{3}{4}$ vj; liquorice root, $\frac{3}{4}$ vj; fennel seeds, $\frac{3}{4}$ iij; sulphur, $\frac{3}{4}$ 3iij; refined sugar; $\frac{3}{4}$ xviii. (2)

The active ingredients are sulphur and senna. The action of the former, when administered alone,

(1) In the fourth volume of his Clinical Medicine, speaking of constipation, Troussseau remarks: "The use of these pills, (aloes, colocyynth, gamboge, and rhubarb) is certainly less injurious than is generally supposed; and the abuse of them in England shows that we, on this side of the Channel, are inclined to exaggerate their evil effects."

(2) This formula is given in the Pharmacopœia Borussiae.