

THE USE OF INDIGO AS AN EMMENAGOGUE.

Dr. S. T. YOUNT, of La Fayette, Ind, in a paper read before the Tippecanoe County Medical Society, recommends very highly the employment of indigo as an emmenagogue. He writes: "It is perfectly safe, thoroughly reliable, and painless in its action. It is insoluble in water or alcohol, but readily dissolves in strong sulphuric acid. This so changes its character that it is then readily soluble in water without changing its color.

"It is odorless and tasteless, and may be given in doses of 3 j. to 5 ss. The great difficulty is the nausea and vomiting which the crude drug produces when given in very large doses. There are three varieties of the crude drug: Bengal, Turkey, and Chinese.

"The Bengal is richest in coloring matter, containing about fifty per cent., and inasmuch as the virtue resides in the coloring matter, the best effects are obtained from this variety. As an emmenagogue it has been used in my practice about a year and a half. My attention was first directed to it on one occasion when I was called to remove a retained placenta in a case of abortion at the third month. Naturally inquiring what had been taken to produce the abortion, I was told that the lady had taken indigo in teaspoonful doses three times a day, that she had taken it several times, and always with a most satisfactory result to her.

"She informed me at the time that it always produced great nausea and watery discharges from the bowels. Acting on the suggestion offered by this case, I tried it in many and various cases. In one case, where a young lady, aged eighteen, had missed for thirteen months, the menses returned after taking the crude indigo for two weeks; but the disgust and nausea produced by the bulky powder rendered her unable to continue it longer, and she menstruated three more months; then they stopped again. After using the remedy for eight or nine months in this crude state, I set about to find some way of condensing it, or rendering it less bulky, for it is the bulk of the dose, not the remedy, that disturbs the stomach and disgusts the patient. About a month later Mr. O. G. Zerse, an apothecary of La Fayette, turned over to me a concentrated extract, as he called it, five grains of the extract equalling twenty-six grains of the crude drug. I have since then used it in forty-eight cases of amenorrhœa, of all kinds and causes, with but three failures, and a colleague has used it in six cases without any failure. To test its effect I have given the remedy in the amenorrhœa of phthisis, and have always had a definite result, namely, the appearance of the menses, the menses stopping again when the remedy was stopped. The effects with the crude drug and the concentrated preparation are identical, except that the nausea does not occur when

the extract is used. The menses come on painlessly and very suddenly. There is no warning given. In thirty cases the effects occurred about two days after the last dose, the menses coming on without any warning, gushing out and running often to flow. The hemorrhage in none of the cases was dangerous or alarming. During the administration of the drug the os uteri becomes soft and patulous, admitting the end of index finger. There is often a serous discharge from the vagina. The urine becomes of a brownish-green color and offensive odor. The stools are of a bluish color. The passages are watery and offensive.

"To summarize, indigo is an emmenagogue of decided value in any case. It should not be given to pregnant women. It should not be given where there is an irritable stomach. It should not be given in cases where there is a history of a previous pelvic inflammation. It should not be given in cases where there is marked cerebral anæmia. It may be given in doses of 5 j. to 3 ss., two or three times a day, of the crude drug, or in five-grain doses of the concentrated extract. The powder of the crude should be given mixed with a little subnitrate of bismuth, and the patient should drink a little whiskey afterward. In cases where given continuously for a long period, give tr. gentian comp. after each dose. Give the concentrated extract in capsules mixed with extract of gentian and subnitrate of bismuth."

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PUNCTURE AND INJECTION OF ETHER AND IODOFORM IN PURULENT ABSCESS OF THE BUTTOCKS.

At a recent meeting of the Paris Surgical Society, M. Trélat reported a case of purulent abscess, successfully treated by puncture and injection of ether and iodoform. The patient, a girl aged 17, had been attacked with typhoid fever eighteen months previously, and the abscess was diagnosed as necrobiotic, consecutive to vitreous alternation of the muscular fibres. A puncture was made, which gave issue to .45 grammes of pus, and 90 grammes of ether and iodoform were injected into the cavity. M. Trélat asked whether simple abscesses might not be treated in the same way. M. Terrier thought that in cases like that cited by M. Trélat simple puncture was sufficient. M. Championnière has found iodoform very irregular in its effects, and objected that the injection of this substance in ether constituted a long and painful treatment. M. Dentu had obtained better results with alcohol and chloride of zinc. M. Trélat, in his reply to these objections, stated that it was important, in an æsthetic point of view, to avoid the cicatrix which always remained after an incision, and this was practically accomplished by puncture and the injection of iodoform.—*London Medical Record*, May 16, 1887.