

tions. Finally, it must be a drug from which no disastrous habit can be formed.

Potassium iodide has been employed largely. The potash is itself toxic, the iodine causes emaciation, stimulates waste, and except when otherwise indicated by a cachexia coming under its influence is not advisable. The relaxant powers of this salt are uncertain and indirect.

The nitrites are the agents almost universally utilized for the purpose under discussion. Their power is unquestioned, it is quickly manifested and speedily subsides. They are ideal agents for sudden emergencies, but their effect can be maintained only doubtfully, and then by a multiplication of rapidly repeated doses that may be all right in an emergency, but would be intolerable in a chronic affection such as this. Their effect upon the eliminant apparatus is similarly evanescent. Even if they could be administered continuously for months and years, it is uncertain that no urtoward effects would ensue.

When we come to veratrine we find in it an agent that amply fulfils every item of the complicated indication. Veratrine is uniform in its composition and unvarying in its action; by its use continuous relaxation of vascular tension has been maintained for eighteen months, and may be maintained for years if desirable with a few daily doses, without any sort of injury, immediate or remote. It relaxes vascular tension, stimulates elimination by the kidneys, liver, bowels, skin and lungs; in the small doses employed it strengthens the heart muscle directly as well as controlling its rate and rhythm by strengthening inhibition; it does not antagonize any other treatment that may be required, or interfere with nutrition in any other manner than by sweeping away the waste that blocks the channels, and it does not create any drug habit. Really, it seems that if we had had a drug made to order we could not have improved upon veratrine. It is about the safest medicinal agent in the *materia medica*, for it provides for its own elimination, and possesses a remarkable safeguard against possible overdosing. While in excessive doses veratrine depresses the heart, it irritates the stomach and bowels to such a degree as would necessitate its discontinuance, while yet given in doses far below the danger line. To do serious harm with veratrine would argue a depth of ignorance and carelessness that we would not willingly acknowledge to be possible in the medical profession. Even the accidental taking of an excessive dose carries with it the antidote in the gastric irritation it would cause.

Why, with all these advantages, is veratrine not universally employed for this indication, for which it is so admirably designed?

Turn to the last edition of the *Pharmacopœia*, page 498, and