

CANADA LANCET.

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NUX VOMICA.

CLEANINGS FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

The Powder.—The dose of powdered nux vomica usually prescribed is from three to five grains.

The Extract.—Of the alcoholic extract, the dose is half a grain.

The Tincture.—Until recently there has been but one tincture of nux vomica, and its dose is from five to ten minims. It is the old Dublin formula of 1826, two ounces of nux vomica to eight ounces of rectified spirit, which was adopted in the United States Pharmacopoeia, and is the one given in Pereira and other works on materia medica.

The dose of the tincture of the new British Pharmacopoeia, which is a much weaker preparation, is from half a drachm to a drachm.

It is usual to order nux vomica, in these doses, to be taken steadily three times a day for several weeks. But when a more powerful and speedy action is required, it is given in increasing doses continuously, until some obvious effect is produced upon the system. Either mode might justly be considered as extremely safe, yet we have a case on record where it was otherwise.

Taylor, in his work on poisons, states that a lady taking three grains of powdered nux vomica three times a day, as directed, was compelled to discontinue its use on the sixteenth day, on account of the colic and purging it occasioned; five days afterwards, although not taking the remedy, she experienced ringing in the ears, drowsiness, increased sensibility to light and sound, and numbness and impairment of speech. And on the ninth day she lost her speech, and tetanic symptoms with twitching of the muscles of the face and arms set in, as well as trismus. She swallowed with difficulty, her pupils became dilated, and her skin hot. On the fifth day after discontinuing the nux vomica, she was exhausted from tetanic convulsions.

This exceptional case, occurring eight years since, did not seem to affect the confidence of the profession in the remedy, for it is constantly prescribed in various diseases in a similar manner, and with impunity. And as the knowledge of its remedial powers is ever increasing, so is its employment becoming continually the more extended.

Fatal Doses.—Taylor speaks of two cases, in which five grains of powdered nux vomica proved fatal. In that of another, where thirty grains of the powder in two doses of fifteen grains each, caused the death of a girl ten years of age. And, according to Guy, two grains of the alcoholic extract have likewise proved fatal.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the excellent results obtained from nux vomica in pyrosis, gastrodynia, dysentery, colica pictonum, prolapsus of the rectum, tremor of drunkards, hysterical abortion, impotence, &c., &c., which are given in Pereira. We shall, therefore, take up the subject

where it is there left off, and quoting from Stillé's admirable work on materia medica, and from other sources, endeavour to give our readers an additional and more recent synopsis of the opinions of the profession concerning this agent.

Paraplegia.—Dr. Brown Séquard says that nux vomica should be avoided as a most dangerous poison, in all cases of paraplegia in which there are signs of congestion or inflammation of the spinal cord or its meninges, for in these it but increases the cause of the paralysis, and produces an aggravation of the symptoms. He says there are two distinct groups of cases of paraplegia, one distinguished by symptoms of irritation, the other characterized by the absence of them. The symptoms of irritation observed in the former class are convulsions, cramps, twitchings, erection of the penis, formation, and itching; diminution of temperature, wasting of the muscles, œdema, bed sores, and alkaline urine. In the second class all these symptoms are wanting, and the paraplegia is caused by the white or non-inflammatory softening, or is of the reflex kind; for this class nux vomica is particularly applicable, from the power it possesses of augmenting the amount of blood sent to the spinal cord and membranes, and, from the extra nutrition thereby derived, of increasing the vital properties of this nervous centre. *Braithwaite* $\frac{3}{4}$.

Recurring Hordeolum.—Dr. S. C. Sewell of Ottawa, states that he has lately been very successful in the treatment of obstinate stye by means of small continuous doses of tincture of nux vomica, and gives two cases in illustration. The first, that of a young lady whose eyes for upwards of four years had never been entirely free from styes, and who had lost her eyelashes from them. He prescribed four minim doses of the Dublin tincture twice a day, and found the effect immediate; for the stye then forming, receded, and she has not been troubled with more than two or three of them since, (now two years and a half). She took the medicine regularly for six weeks, and has twice resorted to it for a similar period since. The other was that of a girl of fifteen, who for two years had constantly been troubled with styes, and this too was cured by four minim doses of tincture of nux vomica. The stye she had on her eye at the time, suppurated, but she never had another one afterwards (now two years). He says that cases of recent hordeolum yield quite as readily to this treatment as those of long standing.

Abscess of the Labia Pudendi.—Dr. Sewell also relates a case of obstinate recurring abscess of the labia, which regularly made its appearance a day or two before or after the menstrual period. The lady had thus been afflicted nearly every month for four or five years, and had consulted a great number of physicians in vain for relief. On inquiry he found that they had first made their appearance on the cessation of obstinate styes, with which she had