

recommended. It is readily soluble in equal parts of liquor potassæ and water; and, if the drug is pure, this solution is not precipitated by the addition of water. The injection of this solution to the extent of one-third to one-tenth of a grain quickly purges, sooner, it is said, than when given by the stomach, and it causes no pain.

Podophyllin is a rather uncertain purgative. The pure drug causes very little griping. In too large doses, it is very apt to produce slimy and bloody stools, particularly in children.

STAPHISAGRIA.

THIS seed, made into an ointment, is employed only as an external application, to destroy the lice which infest the bodies of dirty persons.

Formerly the seeds were ground to a meal, which was mixed with a simple ointment. On account of the large quantity of oil in the seeds the meal was always very coarse, and the ointment thus made was a gritty and uncomfortable application. This inconvenience Squire has remedied. "Finding" he says "that this meal contained a certain amount of oily matter, the author had the oil removed from a small quantity of the meal by percolation with ether, and found that the meal was then capable of being reduced into a fine powder." This powder he tried in several cases of phthiriasis (louse disease), and found it quite inert. He found that the proportion of oil extracted from the meal amounted to as much as one half (by weight) of the meal. On making trial of the oil, suitably diluted with olive oil, he found it as efficient as any remedy he has ever tried against phthiriasis. "A cheap way of preparing the oil for application is to digest the seeds in melted lard, and strain

while hot. The filtrate is an ointment of the seeds of staves-acre. Two drachms of the bruised seeds should be used to an ounce of lard."

ACTÆA RACEMOSA.

THIS medicine is used much more extensively in America than in England. It has been employed for centuries by the Indians and settlers, for chorea and many uterine diseases, and to assist the uterus to expel the child. Those most experienced in the employment of this drug speak loudly in its praise.

Although not used as a local application to the skin, some assert that given internally it will prevent the pitting of small-pox.

Actæa is said to be useful in simple and malignant sore throat, and in that troublesome, chronic, and obstinate disease in which the mucous membrane of the pharynx is quite dry, and spotted over with inspissated mucus.

This remedy is not, as far as the author knows, used in stomach or intestinal disease.

Absorbed into the blood, it depresses both the force and frequency of the pulse. Some compare it to aconite, and use it for similar purposes. It has been given, it is said, with much success, in influenzas and catarrhs, accompanied with headache, stiffness of the muscles, dull, aching pain in the bones, and a bruised sensation as if the body had been beaten all over.

This plant has been much used in acute rheumatism and it is stated that it quells the pain speedily. It is also extolled for lumbago and sciatica; and it is said to subdue lumbago more effectually than any other remedy.

The author has given this plant a patient trial in lumbago and sciatica, and in those cases of chronic rheumatism where

one part of a tendon, muscle, or articulation in the back or elsewhere, is exquisitely painful on movement, and in cases characterized by great stiffness of the muscles of the back, loins, and hips, but unfortunately with very little if any success.*

In his hands, however, this remedy has yielded very satisfactory results in certain forms of chronic rheumatism; for instance, in rheumatoid arthritis, where the joints are enlarged and much stiffened. It does not, however, suit all alike, but those cases best when the pains are worse at night; and the remedy may be considered especially indicated when the disease is traceable to some previous derangement of the uterus, as sudden suppression of the menses, an abortion, a painful and difficult confinement, or to the disappearance of the catamenia at the natural term. The joints, it may be, are not enlarged, and the pains may flit from joint to joint instead of lodging steadily in one place. Painful cramps of the legs sometimes torment such patients. The symptoms are aggravated by wet and cold weather, and by certain winds. The sleep is much broken by the pains. In these cases, actæa not unfrequently gives considerable relief from pain and cramps, and induces quiet and refreshing sleep, independently of its possible narcotic action. But, while the indications just given are for the most part to be depended upon, it must be confessed that this remedy does sometimes relieve chronic rheumatism and rheumatoid arthritis occurring in men, and is sometimes serviceable in those cases in which the pains are worst during the day.

Again, in a case like the following, actæa is signally beneficial:—A patient is first troubled with pains, apparently rheumatic, in most of the joints, but with scarcely any fever or swelling. The disease soon seats itself in one part, as the wrist and hand; the tissues here become much thickened, the bones of the wrist enlarged, till after a time all movement is lost, and the member becomes useless. Warmth allays the

* My friend Mr. Joseph Bartlett has recently employed this remedy in these cases with considerable success.

pain, and it almost ceases at night. The attack presents many of the characters of gonorrhœal rheumatism, but there is no history of gonorrhœa. The author has witnessed, several times, the almost instant relief given by this drug in cases like that just described, after iodide of potassium and other remedies had been fairly tried in vain, the pain giving way at once, and the joints becoming again supple and useful.

Chorea, it is said, whether rheumatic or otherwise, yields to actæa. The author has put this statement to the test of experience, and has found that actæa fails altogether when there is no history of rheumatism, but apparently succeeds sometimes when the chorea is of rheumatic origin. It is greatly inferior to arsenic in chorea.

According to American therapeutists, this plant operates powerfully on the uterus. Its action on the uterus is said to be very similar to that of ergot. It stimulates the contractions of the parturient uterus, and hastens the expulsion of the child. Ergot produces a continuous contraction of the uterus, while actæa merely strengthens, but does not prolong the contractile movements, and therefore endangers less the life of the child, and the soft structures of the mother.

Actæa is said to be useful in preventing after-pains, and to expel the placenta; but ergot is preferable, as it produces more persistent contractions. Actæa has been recommended in amenorrhœa, dysmenorrhœa, and in menorrhagia. It certainly controls menorrhagia, although it is inferior to other remedies.

Again, when the menses are suddenly checked from cold, shock, or mental emotion, or when, from similar circumstances, the lochia are suppressed, distressing symptoms are apt to occur, as more or less severe pain in the head, in the back, and down the legs, stiff sore muscles, and bearing-down pains. Actæa racemosa it is said will restore the secretions, and remove the accompanying symptoms.

The same remedy has been given to prevent miscarriages in irritable uterus and prolapsus uteri.

Actæa is said to be serviceable in that common and distressing headache occurring in nervous hysterical women, especially at the menstrual period, or when the flow is too frequent and too profuse, or at the change of life.

The pleurodynia dependent on uterine derangements is also enumerated among the many troublesome complaints over which actæa is said to prevail.

Actæa is said by Sir. J. Simpson to be highly beneficial for women who during pregnancy and after confinement occasionally suffer from great mental disturbance, sometimes amounting to madness. (See Bromide of potassium.)

Actæa has been given to relieve the headache arising from over-study or excessive fatigue.

The tincture, made in the proportion of four ounces of the plant to a pint of proof spirit, is the form in which this medicine is generally employed. Five minims may be given every hour, or fifteen to thirty minims three times a day.

ACONITE AND ITS PREPARATIONS.

PERHAPS no drug is more valuable than aconite. Its virtues are only beginning to be appreciated, but the author ventures to predict that ere long it will be extensively employed.

Aconite is used externally in the form of liniment or ointment, to relieve pain. In the neuralgias, especially of the brow or face, these applications are often of the greatest use, and relieve the distressing pain either permanently or at all events temporarily. It is decidedly more useful in facial than other forms of neuralgia and yet in facial neuralgia it not seldom fails notably in those severe forms termed epileptiform neuralgia.

With our present knowledge, we are unable to predict, with any certainty, the cases wherein aconite will succeed or fail. This much, however, is clear, that neuralgias depend-

ing on diseased bone, or on tumours pressing on nerves, are beyond the control of aconite; but these are not the only forms of neuralgia which will not yield to aconite. Facial neuralgia due to decayed teeth is often obstinate, yet even these cases frequently yield to the external application of strong aconite preparations. Sometimes a case will require the assiduous application of the aconite preparation during three or four days. In neuralgia, however, due to this cause, aconite sometimes quickly loses its effect and the pain returns with its former frequency and severity.

As no harm can follow the employment of aconite externally, it should always be tried; and if unsuccessful, then recourse can be had to other modes of treatment. If aconite succeed at all, it will generally succeed at once; hence, if relief does not come speedily, it is useless to continue it. The preparation should be sufficiently strong to produce decided numbness and tingling in the skin.

A piece of the ointment, the size of a bean or nut, should be applied with friction, which enhances its efficacy. This quantity should be repeated until it induces a sensation of tingling. The liniment, applied with a brush, may be mixed with one half the quantity of chloroform liniment to assist absorption.

In cases where many branches of the fifth are affected it is often sufficient to apply the aconite over the seat of the most intense pain; and again in cases where other nerves, like the great occipital and auricular nerve, are likewise involved, the application of the aconite only over the branches of the fifth most severely affected will often give complete relief.

Then we meet with cases of which the following may be taken as a type:—A woman suffers from severe neuralgic sick headache, preceded by general malaise and a dark discoloration round the eyes; the pain affects, perhaps, only a small branch of the fifth and not uncommonly that twig situated near the outer canthus of the eye, and when this happens, a neighbouring vein often becomes greatly swollen. The pain lasts with great severity a variable time, extending even