

OBSTETRIC MEMORANDA.

EPILEPSY FOLLOWING LABOUR.

ON April 2nd of this year, I was called to attend Mrs. R., aged 28, in her first confinement. Labour began at 3.30 A.M., and was concluded naturally at 7.30 A.M. The pains were not excessively strong, and she bore them well. About noon I saw her, and she was then going on well, except that she complained of throbbing pains in the head. At 4 P.M. I was sent for in great haste, but unfortunately was not at home, and it was near 6 before I got to the bedside. To my astonishment, I found her in a strong epileptic seizure. The pulse was weak, the pupils widely dilated. I was informed that, since her first attack at 3.30 P.M., she had had at least twenty or twenty-five seizures, the fits following one another in rapid succession, and being very violent. Fortunately, I had in my midwifery bag a solution of chloral hydrate, and seeing that no time was to be lost if I was to save my patient, I injected 25 grains into the rectum. I waited half a hour till the fits had ceased, and she was in a profound sleep. I returned in two hours and found her still sleeping, having had no return of the fits, but latterly she had had some twitchings of the limbs. I now injected 15 grains of chloral combined with 40 grains of bromide of potassium and left her. On calling next morning I heard that she had had two mild seizures during the night. She took no notice of anything. For many days her memory was quite lost; but she made a good recovery, and had no return of the fits. On inquiry, I elicited the following facts:—

When fifteen she had a fright, and had a strong epileptic seizure. Since that time she had been quite free from a recurrence. She was married a year previous to the occurrence here related, and her husband says that on two or three occasions she had fainted, but soon came round, and generally slept for a short time. These were evidently *petit-mal* seizures. Her grandmother, on the mother's side, suffered from fits; her mother never had fits, but committed suicide; her mother's sister was a confirmed epileptic, but had a large family, none of whom ever had fits.

Sheffield.

C. NELSON GWYNNE, M.D.

THERAPEUTIC MEMORANDA.

STROPHANTHUS IN HEART-DISEASE.

As the influence and value of strophanthus in heart-disease is at present attracting a good deal of attention, my experience may be of interest. I have administered the drug in twelve cases of heart-disease: nine were functional and three organic, and I have much reason to be pleased with the success of the treatment, and with the amount of relief I gave my patients.

On looking over my notes I find two cases of mitral disease, in one of which there was a loud murmur, both obstructive and regurgitant. The patient was a woman, aged 45, in whom the prominent symptoms were harsh, hacking cough occurring in paroxysms, dyspnoea, and even at times orthopnoea, palpitation, and oedema of feet and legs. The pulse was intermittent, with a regular irregularity, and beating 90 to the minute. Strophanthus was given in half-drop doses at first, and was gradually increased until she was taking 2 minims three times a day. Almost from the first dose taken an alteration in the sufferings of the patient was observed. The heart-sounds were firmer and steadier; the pulse-beats, though still irregular, were not so fast; cough was much less troublesome, and the palpitation was neither so frequent nor so violent. Along with this there was a copious increase in the renal secretion, which soon relieved both the visceral engorgement and the oedema in the feet and legs. In fourteen days she felt so well as to be able to return to her household duties. In the other case of mitral disease the symptoms were much the same, but not nearly so severe. The same dose was given, and the effect was as satisfactory and rapid.

Another case of aortic stenosis in an old lady, aged 60, who had for years been a martyr to chronic cough, palpitation, and the other symptoms attendant upon stenosis of the aortic orifice, received great relief from a one-minim dose of the drug. In this case palpitation was very violent, the pulse was rapid, and there was extensive passive congestion of both lungs. Oedema of the feet and legs was also present in a marked degree. Under the influence of strophanthus the pulse became slower and firmer, the congestion in the lungs lessened day by day, and a copious diuresis soon made an alteration in the oedema. The palpitation was trifling compared to what she previously suffered, and her cough was much relieved.

In the other nine cases in which I administered the drug I could find no trace of a murmur, and the purpose for which the medicine was administered was to allay in some measure the turbulent palpitation of which these people complained. In seven of these cases the palpitation seemed to be dependent upon dyspepsia; remedies were given for that condition. Strophanthus was also used in the hope of its exerting a calming and steadying influence upon the heart, which in all of them it succeeded in doing.

The remaining two were cases of disordered innervation. The pulse was very rapid and irregular, the heart's action turbulent—so much so that at times the sounds could not be differentiated, but seemed all merged in a confused rumble. Both of these patients were much benefited, and though the symptom of which they complained the loudest—namely, palpitation—is not banished, they find that it can be kept within reasonable bounds by a timely dose of strophanthus. All the patients expressed the opinion that the drug had a stimulating effect, which, however, soon wore off. Some of them professed to feel beneficial effects ten minutes after taking their appointed dose. The effect of the medicine was rapid, but did not remain long, and at the end of three or four hours required to be renewed. The system, found, quickly became used to the drug, and to get the amount benefit the dose required to be gradually increased.

In prescribing it I combined it with some bitter infusion, and I never failed to get the physiological action, though Dr. Higham Hill remarks, in the JOURNAL of April 2nd, that it is important not to dilute it except at the time of using. I have never seen sickness or gastric irritation produced, such as we meet with sometimes after digitalis.

The preparation I used was tincture of the strength of 1 in 8, prepared by Messrs. Thos. Christie and Co, London.

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CLINICAL MEMORANDA.

BRACHIAL MONOPLÉGIA IN ENTERIC FEVER.

DR. ARCHER, in describing (JOURNAL, April 2nd) an interesting case of this combination, remarks upon its extreme rarity. In 1879, a girl, aged 13, was under my care in the Leeds Fever Hospital, in whom the left arm became paralysed a few days before death from prolonged enteric fever. A recent blood-clot, of the size of a very small chestnut, was found in the right Rolandic sulcus. No cause—for example, previous blow or local injury—could be assigned for an artery having ruptured there rather than anywhere else. Specific poisons and long pyrexia discover and tend to destroy weak elements of the organism, and thus produce unlooked for "complications." It is, in fact, probably owing to this variability in the original strength or the acquired weakness of different organs and tissues that "no two cases are exactly alike" in any disease.

T. CHURTON, M.D.

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WHOOPIING-COUGH IN A CAT.

FOR the past few weeks I have had under my care a little boy suffering from a more than usually severe attack of whooping-cough, and his mother informs me that for quite a fortnight their cat has had five or six distinct fits of coughing daily, similar in every respect to the boy's, which end after the expectoration of frothy mucus. The cat between the attacks is tolerably bright and active, though not so lively as she formerly was, and has considerably fallen away in condition. This is the first instance of a domestic animal becoming affected through, apparently, infection from a human being which I can remember having observed, and it occurred to me that the fact may be of interest to others.

Liverpool.

O. BOWEN, M.R.C.S.

A WOMAN, named Mary Ann Haynes, has been sentenced to five years' penal servitude for attempting to poison her husband by putting oxalic acid in tea and cocoa prepared for his return. The liquid cocoa was found to contain 16 grains of oxalic acid, and the tea 22 grains.

THE SPREAD OF INFECTION.—A case illustrative of one of the many ways in which infection is spread recently came before Mr. Raffles, the stipendiary magistrate of Liverpool. A man named John Tennant, who held a distress warrant for rent, entered the house of a Mrs. Marley, whose child was ill with measles, and forcibly removed the bedding, although he was informed that it was infected. The defendant was ordered to pay a fine of forty shillings and costs.