

in the *modus operandi* of the *placement d'office*. It would seem, *viz.*, that the police officer cannot take action upon the report that an insane person is likely to commit an act which will endanger himself or others, but must wait for the authority of the *fait accompli*. A case in point is recorded in which by a happy chance alone the disaster of the *fait accompli* was averted, and the *placement d'office* system saved from scandal.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

On Veronal [Ueber veronal]. (Psych. Neur. Wochensch., May 7th, 1904.) Herm van Husen.

This recent hypnotic has now received considerable attention, and the general verdict is decidedly favourable. It was introduced by Fischer and v. Mering; it has a urea nucleus with two ethyl groupings, and it is named chemically diethyl malonyl urea. Its rational formula shows a resemblance to the sulphonal and trional groupings. It is rather insoluble in cold water but dissolves fairly in hot water, and may be given in hot tea or milk, or it may be administered as a powder or in cachet, or in the form of Merck's cocoa tablets. Dr. van Husen sums up the results which he obtained on sixty-nine patients in the Grafenberg asylum as follows: In simple sleeplessness it is an excellent hypnotic, and for the most part induces sleep within twenty minutes to one hour; this is general in the dose of $7\frac{1}{2}$ grains. In mild cases of excitement it is also very serviceable, but the requisite dose is on an average $15-22\frac{1}{2}$ grains ($1-1\frac{1}{2}$ gr.). The sleep induced is somewhat delayed. In severer cases of excitement and unrest, as in senile restlessness and in dementia præcox, it fails not infrequently. It comes nearest to trional in the quality and quantity of its effect; only rarely does it seem to surpass trional in activity. A certain amount of cumulative action may be noticed (as also in the use of trional) in that the effects will occasionally fail until a third or fourth dose has been given, also in that the effects will often persist awhile after discontinuance of the drug. Prolonged use of veronal is liable to produce habituation, the dose requiring to be raised. Severe after-effects or by-effects are not witnessed, but giddiness, confusion, inclination to stagger, may be noted, especially after doses of $15-22\frac{1}{2}$ grains, occasionally after $7\frac{1}{2}$ grains.

The use of veronal on a large scale is contraindicated at present by its costliness; its advantages over the much cheaper trional, whose efficacy seems to be about on a par with it, are therefore not very obvious.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

A Case of Veronal Poisoning [Ein Fall von Veronal Vergiftung]. (Cbl. f. Nervenheilkunde u. Psychiat., June, 1904.) P. T. Hald.

Not a few cases of toxic symptoms have been recorded after the use of veronal, especially after the employment of the higher doses of $1\frac{1}{2}-2$ or even 3 grammes, but instances of the effects of a single massive dose are scarcely to be found. Dr. Hald's report of the results of 9 grammes (140 grains *circa*) taken in a single dose is the more valuable. The patient was a woman of about thirty, who was admitted in a comatose state, the breathing somewhat laboured (*leise keuchend*)

and accompanied by tracheal rales. There was no response to any except painful stimuli, and then only by groans or facial contractions. Tendon reflexes slightly increased; pupils sluggish. The face was congested but not cyanosed, and the pulse and breathing were good. These symptoms had developed within some ten to twelve hours after the taking of the above-mentioned dose. On the following day head retraction was observed, and twitchings of the trunk, somewhat tetaniform in character. A pemphigoid eruption was then noted, the blisters on erythematous bases. The urine (removed by catheter) alkaline and dark, but no blood, albumen, or sugar. Pulse 108, fairly vigorous, but the respiration shallow and with occasional pauses.

On the fourth day the stupor had quite disappeared, and the patient was steadily recovering.

Dr. Hald is of opinion that the head retraction and the tetaniform twitchings may have a certain diagnostic value, as similar symptoms were observed in Gerhartz's case of veronal poisoning.

The probability is that the whole of the 9 grammes were absorbed, as the washing out of the stomach did not occur till eight hours had elapsed.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

On the Hypnotic Action of Neuronal [*Über die hypnotische Wirkung des Neuronal*]. (*Psych. Neurol. Wochenschr.*, June 18th, 1904.)
Siebert, A.

Dr. Arthur Siebert describes his results in the Bonn Asylum with this new hypnotic. Over one hundred patients received the drug in the average dose of 1 gramme, and in about 25 *per cent.* of the cases $\frac{1}{2}$ gramme sufficed; only very occasionally was the dose of 1.5 grammes necessary.

Neuronal is bromyl-diethyl-acetamide; it is obtained by the replacement in the acetamide molecule of 3 atoms of hydrogen by 1 atom of bromine and 2 ethyl groupings respectively. It is a white crystalline powder freely soluble in ether, benzol, alcohol, and oil, but relatively insoluble in water, 1 in 115 parts; this solubility in water is, however, much freer than that of either sulphonal or trional. The drug has a cool, bitter, somewhat menthol-like taste, which seems in certain of the cases to have caused much complaint and to have given rise to discomfort in the œsophagus, eructations, and in two cases to vomiting.

Dr. Siebert considers that the hypnotic value of neuronal is about equal to that of trional—that it is less than that of veronal, as 2 : 3, but greater than that of chloral hydrate, as 2 : 1.5, and greater than dormiol, as 2 or 2.5 : 1.5. The effective doses of these drugs severally will, therefore, be in inverse proportion to these ratios.

In price it about equals veronal, therefore has the great disadvantage of costliness as compared with the equally effective trional.

HARRINGTON SAINSBURY.

A Year's Experience of the Lumbar Puncture [*Un an de ponctions lombaires*]. (*Gaz. des Hôp.*, June 29th, 1904.)
Chauffard et Boidin.

We have here the results of a series of observations carried on at the Hôpital Cochin during a period of twelve months. In 140 patients