

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*)