

all spasmodic movements or pains appear to yield to its power. In more than one instance I have given it with the best effects in gastralgia, and in dyspeptic cases, accompanied with spasm of the stomach. At this time, in conjunction with Dr. James Blundell, I am administering it in such a case with success.

A curious fact in reference to the effects of prussic acid on the animal system, is stated by Dr. Scanlan, (Dublin Journal of Med. and Chem. Science, March, 1832,) namely, that it *ergotizes* the crane-fly (*tipula*,) promoting parturition, by strong convulsive efforts.—*Tr.*]

SOLUTION OF CYANURET OF PURE POTASSIUM AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PRUSSIC ACID.

In consequence of the liability to uncertainty in the strength of medicinal prussic acid, MM. Robiquet and Villermé were induced to think that the cyanuret of potassium might be advantageously substituted for that medicine, the more as its effects on the animal economy are the same.

Mode of Preparation.

M. Robiquet's process consists in exposing ferruginous prussiate of potass for some time to well-sustained heat in a stone crucible, taking care to stop the mouth of it during the period of its cooling. By this means the cyanuret of iron is completely decomposed, and that of potass remains unaltered. The residue of this intense calcination is a blackish lamellar mass, which is, in fact, the cyanuret of potassium, rendered dark by the iron and carbon belonging to the cyanuret of iron. This mass is to be washed in water: it deposits iron and carbon, whilst the cyanuret of potassium dissolves, and is transformed into hydrocyanate of potass.

When the operation has been well conducted, the solution is perfectly colourless, and retains no portion

of iron. Well prepared cyanuret of potassium is white and transparent; it may be fused by heat without change: the action of the air, however, and of carbonic acid in part decompose it. It may be preserved for any period of time, provided it be kept free from all humidity.

Action of the Cyanuret of Potassium and Hydrocyanate of Potass on man and the lower animals.

MM. Robiquet and Villermé made some experiments with this remedy in my presence. The tenth part of a grain killed a linnet in one minute. A guinea-pig was killed in two or three minutes by rather less than a grain.

A drop of solution, containing only a hundredth part of a grain of cyanuret, caused a linnet to fall dead in half a minute. Half a gros, containing five grains of cyanuret, put an end to a strong dog in a quarter of an hour. The symptoms of poisoning resembled those produced by hydrocyanic acid; no instances are recorded of its poisonous effects on man.

Mode of Administration.

Dissolve cyanuret of potassium in eight times its weight of distilled water, and it forms hydrocyanate of potass. The salt, mixed with water in this proportion, may be called "medicinal hydrocyanate of potass." This solution should always be extemporaneous, being liable to transformation into carbonate of ammonia.

It may be given in the same doses as medicinal prussic acid without danger, and may form a part of the same preparations as those into which prussic acid enters. It may even be freed from the action of the small quantity of alkali contained in the cyanuret, either by adding a few drops of some vegetable acid, or prescribing it in an acid syrup; the advantage would, moreover, be gained of setting the prussic acid at full liberty.

If instead of the hydrocyanate of potass the cyanuret is made to enter into a mixture, a quarter of a grain gradually increased to a grain, will be the proper proportions, though the latter dose has been exceeded by some practitioners. The following are a few formulæ.

Pectoral Mixture.

Medicinal hydrocyanate of potass..1 gros.
Distilled water 1 livre.
Refined sugar.....1½ once.

Seven drachms to be taken night and morning, and the dose may be divided so as to give five or six such quantities in the twenty-four hours.

Pectoral Potion.

Infusion of ground ivy..... 2 onces.
Medicinal hydrocyanate of potass 15 drops.
Syrup of marshmallows..... 1 once.

Eighty minims to be taken every three hours.

Mixture of Cyanuret of Potassium.

Lettuce water.....2 onces.
Cyanuret of potassium½ a grain to 2 grains.
Syrup of marshmallows....1 once.

Seven drachms and a half every two hours.

Syrup of Hydrocyanate of Potass.

Clarified simple syrup.....1 livre.
Medicinal hydrocyanate of potass.1 gros.

This syrup may be added to ordinary pectoral mixtures, in lieu of other syrups.

CYANURET OF ZINC.

The cyanuret of zinc has been latterly extensively used in Germany as a substitute for prussic acid; and it has acquired the credit of possessing decided vermi-