

Breathing difficult.

Mental faculties unimpaired.

Death usually by syncope.

Fatal termination in one to eight hours.

Aconitine, to which the plant owes its death-dealing powers, is only slightly soluble in Water, dissolves in Benzole, and in a mixture of Alcohol (4 parts), Ether (2 parts), and Chloroform (2 ½ parts). The amount occurring in the fresh root varies. It is supposed to be about ¼ grain.

One test is to make a solution of the suspected matter in concentrated Sulphuric acid. The liquid acquires a yellow colour, changing during the course of time to brown, reddish brown, and violet.

The poison is removed from the body, for analysis, in the following fashion: Treat the contents of the stomach with Alcohol, made acid with Tartaric acid. Evaporate at a temperature not above 60°. Re-dissolve in water. Remove impurities by shaking with Ether. Precipitate with Bicarbonate of Soda.

Proof of the presence of the alkaloid is afforded by its action upon small birds and mice, as well as by the numbing, tingling sensation it imparts to the mouth.

Aconite poisoning figures, as we have stated before, chiefly in cases of accident, although the annals of crime are not free from records of cases wherein it has been employed, in the form of pills, to take life. In one instance it was applied with fatal results to vegetables which were "peppered" with the powdered root.

CHAPTER III.—ALCOHOL.

THIS—the greatest of poisons, were we to admit all cases which might be laid to its use or abuse—is seldom administered in doses large enough to cause death. Although one authority informs us that "suicide by alcohol is rare," we venture to say that in our opinion this statement is wholly in error. Are there not hundreds and thousands who systematically "drink their lives away"? Although the process is slow it is none the less sure, and none the less criminal. Injected into the cellular tissue, it acts with great virulence.

In some of its well-known forms alcohol is familiar to every one. To the murderer it affords a ready vehicle for administering deadly potions, whilst infants have lost their lives by being held over its vapours.

Cream Emulsion (Loeplund's *Cremer Hordeatus*) is the latest and most improved form of fat foods. Entirely superseded Cod Liver Oil. Delicious flavour. Largely prescribed by the Medical profession. Sold by Chemists, or apply to Loeplund, 14, St. Mary Axe, E.C.

To a child one or two ounces of "absolute" alcohol would prove a fatal dose, whilst few adults could survive from 2 ½ to 5 ounces.

The following are amongst the "symptoms" of alcoholic poisoning:—Great excitement—Flushed or pale face—Giddiness—Delirium—Livid lips—Dozing—Depression—Eyes staring and injected—Pupils dilated and little effected by light—Skin cold—Breath smelling strong of alcohol. Death is, as a rule, due to paralysis. When examined internally, the stomach is found to be of a distinctly red colour and congested.

Of the cases recorded, the following will serve as examples:

A boy of nine years of age, and a girl of five years, died from the effects of drinking two-and-a-half ounces of spirit (67 per cent. strength).

Two brothers drank three bottles of porter with which someone had secretly mixed twenty-four ounces of whiskey. A quarter of an hour after finishing the last bottle, one became insensible. He ultimately recovered, whilst his brother, after staggering for some distance, fell to the ground. Four hours afterwards all consciousness and sensibility were extinct, his feeble pulse beating 80, his breathing irregular. His pupils were dilated and deglutition became impossible. Thus he remained until fifteen hours after the debauch when he died.

Owing to the rapidity with which alcohol is absorbed and eliminated, it happens that if a person survives a few days, in case of acute poisoning, none is likely to be found in the body. According to Dr. Percy and Sir R. Christison, alcohol is absorbed by the brain, and may be found there after death.

Its chemical test is as follows:—

The contents of the stomach, or suspected liquid are distilled by the aid of a water bath and the vapours condensed in a suitable apparatus. If the liquid be acid, neutralize with a solution of carbonate of soda. The liquid distilled over, should be mixed with fused calcium chloride, and re-distilled. The resulting liquid, first shaken with an excess of calcium chloride, is allowed to stand in a tube for the alcohol to rise to the surface. This may be tested by its taste, smell, volatility and the blue colour of its flame, when lighted. Boiled with a saturated solution of bi-chromate of potash to which sulphuric acid has been added, alcohol will impart a green colour, due to the formation of oxide of chromium. This test may be applied to alcoholic vapour, by passing the same through a tube in such a way that it comes into contact with asbestos soaked in the bi-chromate solution previously mentioned, and a green colour is produced.

Gratis to Nurses, &c.—Samples and particulars of Loeplund's Milk and Malt products, &c., will be forwarded free to Nurses and Hospital authorities on application to Loeplund, 14, St. Mary Axe, E.C.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)