

potassium is employed, none of the metal is found in the urine, has its simple origin in this, that there is no mercury in the organism. Proof of this lies in the fact, that in the corpse of an individual who had twice been under mercurial treatment during the last six months of his life, only traces of the metal could be found in that organ by which its elimination chiefly takes place—namely, the kidney.

It would be of great importance to submit to minute examination the organic elements of urine which contains mercury. I have not found that such urine is always albuminous.—*Medizinische Jahrbücher Zeitschrift der K. K. Gessell. der Ärzte in Wien and Edinburgh Medical Journal.*

ON THE EMPLOYMENT AND VALUE OF THE SEMEN DIGITALIS AND ITS DIFFERENT PREPARATIONS FOR THE TREATMENT OF ORGANIC AFFECTIONS OF THE HEART.

By Dr. PFAFF.

The following are the principal rules to which Dr. Pfaff recommends the principal administration of digitalis in disease of the heart:—1. The digitalis ought not to be administered in increasing but rather in decreasing doses. 2. We ought to diminish the dose as soon as the paralytic action on the heart and the arterial system becomes evident. The calming power exercised by the digitalis on the activity of the heart is durable, and lasts sometimes during five or six weeks.

The digitalis ought not to be continued, under whatever form it may be, for more than six or eight days, and if, after eight days of its employment, the wished-for result has not been obtained, we must have recourse to colchicum. This also exercises a calming action on the heart, and if, after its employment, we have again recourse to the digitalis, the remedial symptoms are more readily manifested and more prolonged.

In torpid subjects the administration of the digitalis may very well be preceded by, as it were, a previous cure by colchicum. In most cases it is advantageous, in order to avoid disagreeable effects of the digitalis on the organs of digestion, to have it associated with aromatics, or bitter and tonic extracts.

In old persons it is better mixed with quinine; in tuberculous persons with opium; in anasarctous persons with liquor potassæ, acetate of ammonia, squills, and spirits of juniper; in plethoric people with tartar emetic sulphate of potash and nitre; and in anæmic persons with extracts and tincture of iron.

In noticing the different preparations of digitalis, the following is the opinion of Dr. Pfaff. The powder is an excellent mode of administration. Nevertheless Dr. Pfaff prefers the infusion.

The powder, indeed, affects the stomach in a more decided way, and brings on the heartache and pains in the stomach, whilst the infusion oftener produces colic. The decoction causes this action on the bowels a higher degree, but it has also more diuretic properties than the other preparations.

The alcoholic tincture has the same action as the infusion, but in a smaller dose. It provokes congestive, cerebral phenomena, giddiness, &c. The same action is produced, and more rapidly, by ethereal tincture, but disappears as soon as the cardiac symptoms begin. One of the most interesting points in these researches of M. Pfaff relates to the external employment of digitalis. In opposition to the opinion of many physicians he regards this mode of administration as being capable of rendering service in cases where complications hinder its internal employment. He remarks, for instance, on the utility of a mixture of equal parts of chloroform, and ethereal or alcoholic tincture (eight grammes of this mixture in a poultice three times a day), to be maintained as long as a sensation of burning remains.

In the same way, M. Pfaff recommends the application, on the seat of a blister, of thirty centigrammes of powdered digitalis morning and evening. Sometimes one application will succeed in keeping down the activity of the heart during weeks and