

DIGITALIS IN PRACTICE.

At a recent meeting of the N. Y. Academy of Medicine, Dr. A. Jacobi said his paper was in the nature of some remarks on digitalis in practice, and was based on experience in its use in many hundred cases which had come under his observation during the last quarter of a century. While a great deal had been written on the use of digitalis, it was based largely on the generally accepted view of its physiological action; his own experience, being more or less in a different line, was in some respects new. With regard to fatty degeneration of the heart, the general impression was that its treatment could only prove palliative, but Dr. Jacobi thought it was a mistake to give up a case of partial degeneration of any organ as hopeless. He had found the use of digitalis in cases of fatty heart to be of benefit, and the method of its action was by increasing the nutrition of the organ. Given in these cases in combination with iron, and in some cases with camphor, its effects were at times admirable. In chronic consumption with pulmonary infiltration digitalis was a valuable attribute in the treatment, and, quoting from a paper which he had read before the New York State Medical Society, Dr. Jacobi said he knew of nothing which was so effectual in regulating the circulation, in spite of the many localized obstacles in pulmonary phthisis, as was digitalis, the beneficial influence being manifest from the increased regularity and power of action of the heart muscle. In connection with arsenic, digitalis had more than a temporary effect in the incipient stage of phthisis. There were cases of dyspepsia and resulting indigestion in which digitalis was borne well. Its effect upon the circulation resulted in increased nutrition of the heart and of other organs throughout the body, and hence he had found it of benefit in anæmia from over-exercise, from excesses, from diarrhœa, and in certain other conditions, either alone or in conjunction with stomachics, stimulants, etc. Digitalis was a diuretic through its action upon the heart and arteries only, and consequently the forms of dropsy in which it was of benefit were limited according to the cause. The effect was the indication for the size of the dose. It should not be continued

in quantities causing tinnitus aurium, dizziness, etc. The author was positive that he had had no occasion to regret having administered the drug in the following doses: Of digitalin, a tenth to an eighth of a grain daily in three doses; of the extract of digitalis, a grain and a half to two grains daily in two or three doses. Such doses he had been in the habit of giving day after day for one or more weeks, and he had found them both safe and efficient.

The extract of digitalis had served him better than any other preparation of the drug. Digitalin had to be given with more caution, and it was often inert. He had given up the use of digitalin, as well as the tincture of digitalis, by hypodermic injection, because of the local irritation which they produced. Digitalis could be given in a five or ten-grain dose, perhaps to be repeated after a few hours, in a case in which its action could be watched. The fluid extract had not proved so satisfactory in his hands as the other preparations.

Dr. Jacobi then read the histories of a number of cases illustrative of different disorders in which he had found digitalis of benefit, the drug usually being administered in combination with others, and hygienic treatment not being neglected. He not frequently combined it with nux vomica and iron, sometimes with nitrate of silver, belladonna, camphor, etc., according to the complexity or simplicity of the patient's disorders. The drug had its failures, as had all others. It was only here and there that some symptoms of commencing poisoning developed. Atheromatous heart and arteries did not bear much digitalis. It would fail in cases in which there was chronic myocarditis, and it would do actual harm in the acute disease. The presence of these diseases, which were occasionally difficult to recognize, was sometimes the cause of failure in its use.—*N. Y. Med. Journal.*

INSTANTANEOUS REMEDY FOR LUMBAGO. — Prof. Burggraave has published the following formula as an instantaneous remedy for lumbago:—Collodium, tincture of iodine, liquid ammonia, p.aq. To be applied widely over the parts with a camel's hair brush. This applies to accidental or à frigore lumbago, or to rheumatic pain produced by a strain or muscular.