

Hardly twenty-five years have elapsed since it was believed that there were only two remedies for chronic diseases of the heart, namely, rest and digitalis. When these two methods failed, all was over, so far as medical treatment was concerned. If the heart was strong enough to stand the drug, a cure might be effected, but chronic diseases of the heart were neglected, more or less.

Not more than twenty-five years ago three methods appeared, nearly simultaneously, but, I would point out, entirely independently, of each other. These were the Oertel cure, the Swedish method, and the balneological-gymnastical method of my late brother and myself.

I may speak first of the Oertel cure, which has been a powerful incentive to renewed research. Still, in the main, Oertel's theory concerning the limitation of the supply of liquids proved to be erroneous. Mountain climbing is only useful in a limited number of cases of heart affections, and should really be resorted to towards the end and not at the beginning of the treatment.

The Swedish method is principally used in the form of Zänder's mechanical contrivances. These do not, however, render the patient independent either of his momentary physical condition or of continued medical supervision. They are useful, nevertheless, wherever the cost of the apparatus and that of running them do not come into consideration. Of course it should never be overlooked that with Zänder's machinery the patient is dependent upon time and locality, and above all, that it is a very difficult matter, to attain a precise degree of individualization in the measurement of the resistance. The machine may be set so as to suit the patient to-day, but the adjustment of the resistance is all wrong for to-morrow. In this way the element of time and the condition of the patients render it necessary that they be constantly under the observation of the physician. When the machine is set to a given resistance, to overcome this may be too much for these patients if the heart action becomes weaker.

Mention may here be made of many drugs that have a marked effect on the heart's action, such as nitro-glycerine, strychnia, digitalis, etc. These remedies are not to be entirely disregarded. Morphine has a decided effect in reducing the frequency of the heart's action, and is useful in some cases of tachycardia, but the effects must be closely watched.

The method of physical exercise, as a treatment for chronic heart diseases, is rather old, beginning with a method which was thought most highly of for a short time. A Dublin physician, Stokes, was of the opinion that persons suffering from heart disease, and more especially from fatty heart, should be prescribed mountain climbing, to cause a return of a sufficient muscular action of the heart. The idea was soon