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## Therapeutical Memorandum.

### EXPERIENCE WITH STROPHANTHUS IN HEART DISEASE.

BY WM. DEVINE, M. D.

My attention was first called to this drug last January, and since that time I have used it in twenty cases of heart disease, organic and functional. Although rather sceptical regarding new drugs, I have found its action in certain cases of heart disease beneficial. No digestive trouble or cumulative effects have been noticed, even where it has been used for two or three months. Of course it will require a more extended use of the drug to demonstrate what advantages it may have over digitalis and other heart remedies. I have written these notes with the object of encouraging others to try it.

I will give a brief account of a few of the most important cases, which remained under observation several months.

Case 1. Lady, æt. fifty-five, suffering with mitral disease of heart (stenosis). January, 1887, was taken ill. When I first saw her she was in a critical condition. Pulse 140, weak, irregular, and intermittent. Great dyspnoea. Physical examination revealed pulmonary oedema and anasarca. During the first week I tried tinct. digitalis, tinct. nucis vom., ammon carb., and stimulants, but could see no improvement. Then gave tinct. strophanthus, gtt. 5 every four hours; in forty-eight hours noticed marked improvement, then increased to gtt. 10 four times daily. She made a good recovery in about two weeks. She continued with tinct. stroph.; taking gtt. 5 four times daily, for one month. Called to see her Sept. 12. Pulse 160; weak, irregular, and

intermittent, great dyspnoea, oedema of ankles. Commenced with tinct. stroph., gtt. 8 t.i.d., and increased up to gtt. 12 t.i.d. Oedema began to disappear on third day, pulse grew stronger and more regular, dyspnoea relieved. She has continued to take gtt. 12 t.i.d. up to the present time, and her pulse is now stronger and more regular than it has been since she came under my observation.

Case 2. J. C., æt. 60. Has been subject to chronic bronchitis for several years. Has had occasional attacks of asthma. Taken sick in May with an attack of acute bronchitis. The most noticeable feature of his illness was a remarkable cardiac weakness. In the third week, under the influence of enfeebled heart action, pulmonary hypostasis developed. To combat this heart weakness tinct. digitalis, tinct. nucis vom., quin., wine of coca, and stimulants were tried, but without avail. Then commenced with tinct. strophanthus, gtt. 6, and gradually increased to gtt. 10. Pulse gradually grew stronger under its influence, hypostasis disappeared in about two weeks, and he was entirely well in three weeks, and remains so at the present time.

Case 3. A. C., a corpulent woman of sedentary habits, had severe attack of acute articular rheumatism with cardiac complications last February. Recovered from rheumatism in two months, but had dyspnoea on slight exertion, pulse weak, intermittent and irregular, frequent dizzy spells. No valvular lesion could be detected, but symptoms made me suspicious of fatty degeneration. Gave her tinct. digitalis in small dose with tinct. ferri chloridi; also gave quinine, nux vomica, etc., but could notice no real improvement. September 1 commenced with strophanthus, gtt. 4 t.i.d.; gradually increased to gtt. 8 t.i.d.

There is a marked improvement in her general condition (October 1). Her wind is much better, pulse stronger and regular, 84 per min. I shall continue with small doses unless I see something to contra-indicate it.

Case 4. C. G., æt. 26, policeman. Father died of heart disease. First came under observation in April. Has had several attacks of palpitation the last year. These attacks would generally last several days, unless he remained absolutely quiet. No treatment gave any permanent relief. He was addicted to the moderate use of tobacco, otherwise his habits were good. I forbade the use of tobacco in any form. Physical examination revealed no valvular lesion. The continued overaction of the heart had ceased; slight hypertrophy. In his case used various cardiac sedatives, but got no permanent relief; finally, September 1, 1887, commenced with tinct. strophanthus, gtt. 5 t.i.d., and have increased it to gtt. 12. Under this course of treatment the excited pulse gradually subsided, and he has had but one slight attack of palpitation since. I could cite a number of other cases to show the efficacy of this drug in heart disease.

I have used strophanthin in several cases; it is a more reliable method of administering the remedy. The dose is one-hundredth to one-fiftieth of a grain. In urgent cases of heart disease, where quick action of drug is desired, it will be found more efficacious than the tincture of strophanthus. The proper average adult dose of the tincture is gtt 10; it may be increased up to gtt. 20.