

its oxygen much more quickly to albuminous matter than to strychnine, oxalic acid, and colchicum preparations. With eserine the results are the same as with morphine, therefore to opium and calabar bean it is a positive antidote. Thus far thirty-five cases of opium-poisoning have been successfully treated by this method.—*The British Medical Journal*, 1895, No. 1799, p. 1369.

DIGITOXIN.

M. G. CORIN notes the varying activity of the various commercial digitalins, and the skepticism with which the announcement of a new active principle is received. Schmiedeberg has isolated four non-nitrogenous active principles—digitonin, digitalin, digitalein, and digitoxin—of which the first three are glucosides and the last three act upon the heart after the manner of digitalis. Unfortunately, the digitalin and digitalein are difficult to obtain pure, and digitoxin is almost insoluble in water. The last presents all of the valuable properties of digitalis; it increases the volume of the pulse, raises the blood-pressure from its stimulation of the myocardium, slows the pulse-rate from its action upon the inhibitory apparatus, both central and peripheral. Personal experiences with this drug in dose of one-sixteenth of a grain demonstrated disagreeable phenomena, but never alarming ones. There was a marked slowing of the pulse, which naturally was of increased tension, and nausea and vomiting, which lasted but a few hours. The formula which is employed is: digitoxin, one-sixty-fourth of a grain; chloroform, ten minims; 90 per cent. alcohol, one drachm in an ounce of distilled water, this representing one dose. This solution does not precipitate with water, nor with normal saline solution. Masius has clearly shown the superiority of digitoxin above the commercial digitalins and preparations of digitalis in the treatment of cardiac asthenia and pneumonia. The author has given the theoretical reasons and practical facts which go to show that digitoxin has a real abortive action upon pneumonic infections. As these observations increase in number the practical physician will substitute this active principle for the preparations of digitalis, which are of varying activity and which may even be dangerous.—*Les Nouveaux Remèdes*, 1895, No. 9, p. 196.

DISINFECTION BY FORMALDEHYDE.

DR. G. BARDET confesses to considerable skepticism as to the possibility of absolute scientific sterilization of the more virulent germs resulting from the inoculation of cultures which are notoriously pathogenic and which are previously placed where disinfection is to be later performed. Hitherto he has considered this problem unsolvable. However at the present time making use of this remedy, also known as formal, in solution with methyl alcohol, and in an apparatus devised by Trillat, a different opinion is entertained. Practical experience has demonstrated that continuous operation of this apparatus in a closed room results in thorough disinfection, which has been proved by bacteriological cultures. The action of formal on wood, metals, and hangings is practically *nil*. The drug penetrates to a considerable extent; it impregnates furniture and bedding, as is shown by the presence of its peculiar odor. This odor can be removed by thorough ventilation, by entering the

room six hours after the completion of the operation, for the purpose of opening the windows. Within a quarter of an hour or more the air can be breathed, but should the room be again closed the formal which has impregnated the walls will be disengaged and the air will again become irrespirable. It is better, then, to allow a current of air to circulate through the apartment for twenty-four hours; at the end of this time the odor will have completely disappeared. In case of necessity, an aëration of four hours will be sufficient to render the room habitable.—*Les Nouveaux Remèdes*, 1895, No. 10, p. 219.

MEDICINE.

UNDER THE CHARGE OF

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DISPLACEMENTS OF THE LIVER.

GRAHAM (*Canadian Practitioner*, June, 1895) states that within certain limits the liver is freely movable, and that in women with pendulous abdomens it may descend one inch below its normal position without causing any unpleasant symptoms. Cases with marked undoubted displacement of the liver are rare, however.

A short account of the literature on the subject is given, also a representation of Heister's remarkable case, published in 1754, in which the normal transverse diameter of the liver had become practically vertical. In 1892 Faure published fifty-four cases collected from the literature. Since then several others have been reported, and these have been collected, making a total of seventy cases, which are given in tabulated form.

The author is of the opinion that the recorded cases might be divided into two classes: (1) the wanderleber of the Germans, *fegato ambulante* of the Italians, floating liver, a condition found in women with pendulous abdomens, usually after frequent childbearing; (2) cases in both males and females in which the causes of displacement are varied.

Floating liver is a comparatively rare condition, any marked degree of mobility of this organ being prevented by the number and strength of its ligaments. The ligaments are in all probability of sufficient strength to carry the full weight of the liver without the aid of the abdominal wall. This the writer has demonstrated in the majority of a series of experiments on the cadaver, the details of which are given. The strength of the ligaments of the liver are further shown by the results of several experiments which Faure conducted, in which he found that it took a weight twenty-five times that of the liver in order to rupture them.