

Observations on the properties of foxglove and the best manner of administering that plant / by C. Labelonye.

Contributors

Labelonye, C.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

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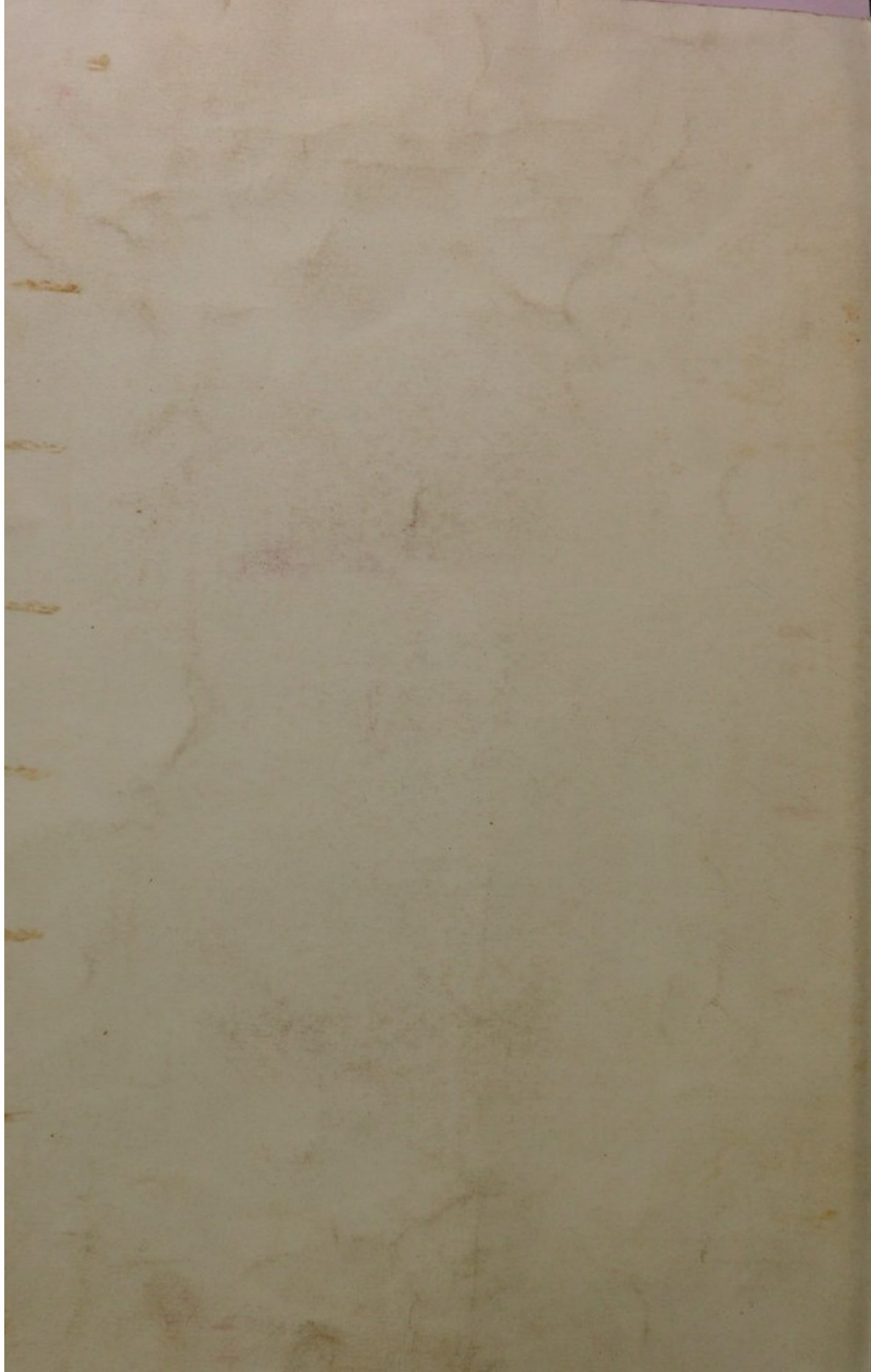
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(10.)
OBSERVATIONS on the PROPERTIES

OF

FOXGLOVE

AND THE

Best Manner of administering that Plant

BY

C. LABELONYE,

Pharmacian of the First class, of the Principal School of Paris, President of the Provident Society of the Pharmacians of Paris, Member of several Scientific Societies, etc., etc.



Purple Foxglove (*digitalis purpurea*) is a plant of the family of the scrophularia; it takes its name from the form of the flowers, which has some resemblance to that of a thimble, in Latin *digitale*.

It would be difficult to determine the exact epoch when this medicine was first brought into use.

Several authors pretend that it was the baccharis of the ancients, which so much was praised by Dioscorides, and used in the baccharion, an ointment prescribed by Hippocrates; but Fuchs, who lived in the middle of the sixteenth century, is the first author who undoubtedly prescribed Foxglove in affections of the chest.

Boërhaave, Uston, Home, and Haller speak of it, but they appear to have been undecided as to its properties.

Withering was the first to make clinical experiments with the plant at the Birmingham Hospital (1775-1778). After him, Charles and Erasmus Darwin employed it in the treatment of dropsies.

After being neglected for twenty years, it was again brought into notice by Doctors Drake, Fowler, Beddoes, Kinglake, Maclean, Ferriar, Mossman, Magennis, all men of eminence in the profession, who have recorded many observations of its efficacy in certain cases of consumption.

Ever since this period Foxglove has been used in France as a remedy for dropsy, especially dropsy in the chest, and the first French physicians have prescribed and employed it with great success. Among them we may name Drs. Trouset, Masse, Chrétien, Bidault de Villiers, Comte and Dupuy.

The French physicians, encouraged by the experience of the English doctors above named, have also employed it for several years with signal success in different pulmonary affections, for asthmas, chronic catarrhs, and neglected colds, but, especially, for diseases of the heart, accompanied by too active a circulation.

“Foxglove,” says M. Soubeiran ⁽¹⁾, “is one of the most precious medicines in the *materia medica*. It is the surest diuretic known, and on that account Foxglove is of the greatest service in the treatment of dropsies. It has also a great action on the circulation, affects the heart in a remarkable manner, and reduces the violence of the movements of that organ to a beneficial action.”

To give an idea of the medical importance of Foxglove, it would suffice to present the list of all the chemists who have been occupied in its analysis. In fact, there are few plants that have been so often chemically examined, and, we must say, there are few plants that have given such uncertain and contradictory results.

The same elements have been found in this plant as in nearly all vegetables : ligneous gum, volatile oil, greasy matter, concrete and volatile matter, resin, gallic acid, colouring matter (soluble in water), albumen, chlorophyl (a bitter principle of a particular nature), lime, salt, potash, and many other productions, but no definite and defined principle to which the remarkable qualities of Foxglove can be attributed.

The best analysis of Peruvian bark and strychnos made by Messrs. Pelletier and Caventon, by proving that the medical properties of those plants are due to the vegetable alkali which they contain, gave rise to the thought, and a very conclusive one, that it is the same in all active plants. An analysis of the plants employed in medicine has been made everywhere, and in all have been found one or more alkaloids, but nothing in the examination of the Foxglove justifies this opinion.

Notwithstanding that it has been studied with this object by a great number of profound observers, amongst whom we find the names of Panquy, Planiava, Lancelot, Rein, Haase, Leroyer, Henry, Quevenne, Dulong, d’Astafort, Radig, etc. ; in spite of all their labours they have not been able to discover any alkaloid properties to which its curative qualities can be attributed. Numerous researches have been published more recently, but they have not tended to shake our opinion in the least ; and in spite of all our respect for the decision of the Society of Pharmacians, which has awarded a prize to Mr. Homolle for the discovery of the qualities of the *Digitaline*, we do not hesitate to affirm that the matter designated by that name does not possess any pure and defined characteristics of the production, and no more deserves the name that it bears than many other substances previously isolated.

This opinion is in fact generally admitted amongst chemists, and it will suffice to cite in support of this assertion, some lines borrowed from the *Annuaire de Chimie* of Messrs. Millon and Reizet, 1846, page 628 :

“The extremely elaborate examinations to which this plant (Fox-

(1) *New Treatise of Pharmacy.*

glove) has been submitted, have certainly led to the discovery of substances, which do not appear to have been described until now.

“ We shall not enter into the details of these different researches, entirely wanting as they are of any guarantee, such as at the present time we expect to find in a chemical work. The complete absence of elementary analysis or any indication of the capacity of saturation, the mode of combination and the phenomena of decomposition, will not allow us to record these results as indisputable chemical facts.”

We may add that the study of the substance called Digitaline has yet to be made, and perhaps it will hereafter be found, as Mr. Pyrame Morin has supposed, that it has no pre-existence in Foxglove, but is merely the produce of chemical reactions.

At all events, every one knows now that it has a very variable qualities and that there is never any certainty of obtaining it exactly the same.

This last assertion is placed beyond all doubt by the authors themselves, who have not found any other means of proving its approximate identity than by comparing its different degrees of bitterness, and by the following passages from a report recently made to the Academy of Medicine. These are the terms in which the reporter (Dr. Bouillaud) expresses himself, with regard to the manner of making the experiment proposed by them :

“ This experiment is so much the more indispensable, as in conforming strictly to the prescribed rules of making it, no one can be sure of producing the same effects. The qualities of Digitaline, setting aside its action upon the animal system, unfortunately possess no essential property by which its purity can be positively ascertained. It will neither crystallize, nor form crystallizing combinations; therefore it can never be said to be obtained perfectly pure, or that it has not been adulterated. Let us add, also, that the test of diluting (that proposed by the authors) is only an approximation, and might very well be insufficient to detect certain frauds.

The physician, on his side, must be informed that Digitaline does not constitute a medicament always identical, and that he must employ it with the greatest prudence, a prudence of course commanded also by the extreme activity of this new therapeutic agent.”

The question of Digitaline appears to us only a secondary consideration, and of very little importance in medicine.

When any substance, as Peruvian bark, for instance, has to be administered in such large doses that there is no way of disguising its repulsive taste, and sparing the patient the extreme disgust which it inspires, we admit, as all the world does, that he who can give a method of concentrating in a few grains of matter the curative qualities of this substance will render an invaluable service to society. But Foxglove is very far from being in this category; it acts in small doses, and it is very easy for a skilful apothecary to conceal its bitter flavour and even prevent its nauseous action upon the stomach by giving it in a more agreeable form. He who should get the means of concentrating its active principles would most assuredly render the task a very dangerous one.

Besides we must persist in thinking that the various properties which this plant possesses, are due, not to one single principle, but to the combination of principles which it contains. It is with this conviction that we have, ever since 1835, endeavored to ascertain what is the best vehicle to dissolve it in, by the aid of which a pharmaceutical preparation might be made combining all the properties of the plant.

This appears to us the more useful, as our pharmacologists not having occupied themselves with this substance, the forms under which it was administered were anything but rational.

So that it was generally prescribed under the form of alcoholic or ethereal tincture, or in powder, and by some physicians, exceptionally, in the form of an infusion. We have shown the bad effects of these modes of administration ⁽¹⁾, and we partly attribute to them the little success that some practitioners have obtained from the employment of this plant, and the reproaches they have received from it.

In reality, the powder has the inconvenience of disgusting patients in general, and occasioning the sickness which sometimes follows.

In the second place, experience shows the few qualities there are in the ethereal tincture, which acts nearly always by its vehicle.

It is a medicine so little to be relied on in its action, that the physician can have no certain results from it, indeed, it offers this old circumstance of being the most active when prepared the worst.

So that ether perfectly rectified at 56°, as prescribed by the Codex, dissolves only the chlorophyl, the greasy matter, the volatile oil and resin, but does not take with it the other principles; on the contrary, ether not rectified, or at 36°, dissolves a pretty strong proportion of these principles, and consequently gives a more active medicine.

Alcoholic tincture prepared with alcohol at 32°, from the Codex, presents but a weak proportion of the properties of this medicine, for alcohol only dissolves the volatile oil, the resin, the chlorophyl, and very little of the extractive principle, and it does not easily dissolve the salts.

The alcoholic tincture is a bad medicine, and besides has, like the ethereal tincture, the inconvenience of always creating irritation.

Water is a better dissolvent, but it does not dissolve, even when hot, all the active principles of the plant, and it carries with it an acrid and nauseous principle which fatigues and irritates the stomach, and often renders the use of the medicine impossible.

We cannot, without imprudence, confide the preparation of an infusion to the patients, for there have been the most inconvenient and serious results from the inconsiderate employment of this plant by persons who were strangers to the science, and, being ignorant of its active properties, used it as an inert plant.

A medicine so active ought only to be administered with great care and reserve, and given in fixed doses, prepared beforehand by an experienced person.

The vehicle which most readily dissolves the different principles to which Foxglove appears to owe its different properties or qualities, is,

(1) *General Bulletin of Therapeutics*, vol. XII, N^o. 8.

without contradiction, the hydrated alcohol (at 56° c.). It effectually dissolves the volatile oil and resin, the bitter principle, the extractive principle, the salts, etc. We were the first to make this discovery, and all the works published on Foxglove confirm our assertion. We also think that the hydro-alcoholic extract prepared with care in vacuo, is the best preparation capable of containing in a small compass the different active principles of Foxglove, as it acts in dose of 4 grain.

Now, is it at all necessary to seek a more active remedy? and would it not present on the contrary great inconvenience, when this remedy, which contains but a part of the properties of the plant, according to the reporter himself ⁽¹⁾, is of such activity, that a dose of a few globules might operate as a poison?

After sixteen years of clinical experiments made in every part of France, and on patients of different constitutions by the best observers, we can affirm that the hydro-alcoholic extract possesses in the highest degree all the properties of Foxglove, and never produces any of the grave accidents determined by Digitaline, such as violent delirium, resembling that of the acute madness observed by the learned reporter.

This extract may be easily administered under different pharmaceutic forms. But syrup and granules, such as we have adopted, are, without doubt, the most agreeable and convenient forms of medicine to take, and their action, being favoured by extreme division, prevents any fatigue to the organs of digestion.

With the aid of our Foxglove Syrup and Granules the doses may be easily varied, and they present the immense advantage of rendering Foxglove available for the most delicate persons, who can continue the use of it, without any feeling of repulsion, until a cure is effected; for this reason our Syrup and Granules have been adopted by nearly all physicians.

Among the physicians of Paris, who have most frequently employed these two preparations for these eighteen years, we will name, Messrs. Andral senr. and junr., Alquié, Auvity, Bouillaud, Biett, Baron Barbier, Bonneau, Bazignan, Beaude, Beaugrand, Bertrand, Bossion, Cazeaux, Cornac, Cottereau, Clarion, Costa, Collineau, Carteaux, Double, De la Berge, Desruelles, Douillet, Dufresnois, De Comeau, Dufour, Fouquier, Fiard, Fauconneau, Dufresne, Frémineau, Gaubert, Goupil, Gremilly, Gresely, Gérardin, Hatin, Hauregard, Keraudren, Lacroze, Lallanne, Lebreton, Lemaire, Lemaitre-Florian, Marjolin, Marchand, Mailly, Mellique, Monod, Moret, Masson, Pinel, Pinel-Grandchamp, Piron, Pasquier, Patin, Parmentier, Puche, Pointis, Portalès, Pouget, Rostan, Rousseau, Ricard, Rousset, Renaut, Rey, Ricque, Rathery, Robert Ag., Serrurier, Sellier, Sterlin, Stable, Talon, Terrin, Texier, Triger, Trou-

(1) "The experience of the reporter tends to prove that the diuretic action is, in effect, far from being constant: indeed, it has only been remarked, without sufficient proof, in one of the patients to whom he administered the Digitaline during four years' practice, so that, in this solitary case, it is possible that the Digitaline was not the cause of the presumed diuretic action."

sel, Vallerand de la Fosse, Vernois, Vidal (de Poitiers), etc., nearly all professors of the Faculty, members of the Academy of Medicine, or physicians to hospitals.

It results from their declarations that the Syrup and Granules contain all the properties of Foxglove, whether employed as a diuretic or to moderate the strength of the pulse and calm the palpitations of the heart; and, if they give them the preference over other preparations of Foxglove, it is because they never determine the accidents which the others frequently do by their deleterious action on the stomach; and also because they are most easily administered, and never disagree with the patients.

This medicine has obtained the best effect in nervous bronchitis, affections of the chest, and above all, in colds, asthmas, chronic catarrhs, hydrothorax or dropsy of the chest, and specially in dropsies, general or partial, accompanied by affections of the heart. A dropsy just begun will disappear by the action alone of this medicine and a proper diet. We are also told of several cases of hemoptysis cured by the use of the Syrup and Granules.

But it is especially in the treatment of organic affections of the heart that they have been used with the most constant success. They have always determined a decrease of the pulse, and an abatement in the force of the impulsion of the heart.

We here add some of the declarations by the physicians mentioned in the preceding page :

SIR, — I congratulate you on the advantageous use that I make every day of the Foxglove Syrup prepared under your directions. I can vouch for its incontestable efficacy against hypertrophy and palpitations of the heart, hemoptysis and asthma, etc.

I also add, what I can truly affirm, that if I give it the preference over all other preparations of Foxglove, it is only from a long experience which has demonstrated to me its great curative powers.

EMMANUEL ROUSSEAU,

*Chief of the Anatomical Works in the Jardin des Plantes,
Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.*

SIR, — It has been known for fifty years that Foxglove, which possesses some of the narcotico-acrimonious vegetable properties, is a powerful diuretic, and the best sedative for the heart that the *materia medica* possesses.

I have prescribed your Foxglove Syrup for five years, and up to the present time I have only had to praise its regular and efficacious action. Persons affected with dropsy, swellings, active aneurism of the heart, and those troubled with nervous bronchitis, have all been re-

lieved and some cured by the use, more or less prolonged, of your Syrup, which possesses all the active properties of Foxglove.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my distinguished consideration,

PUCHE,

Physician of the Hôpital du Midi.

SIR, — You ask my opinion upon the action of the Foxglove Syrup and Granules prepared by you. I answer you at once, that in the numerous cases in which I have thought fit to use them, I can testify to their sedative action on the circulatory system. This fact has been so constant, that every time I have had to combat an affection of the heart, characterised by palpitations, I have not hesitated to give your Syrup and Granules the preference that they merit. Accept, Sir, my distinguished consideration, etc.

V. STERLIN,

*Physician to the Medical Relief Office of the 5th Arrondissement,
Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.*

SIR, — Every time I have had to treat in my practice an organic or non-organic affection of the heart, or a serious effusion, that is to say, whenever I have found occasion to employ Foxglove, I have ordered your Syrup, because to an activity equal to that of all other Foxglove preparations, it joins the very great merit of being less disagreeable to the taste, and provokes less the susceptibility of the patients.

Such is all I have to say in reply to the questions you have addressed to me. I sincerely desire that it may extend the use of a preparation which has rendered real service to the medical profession.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my perfect consideration,

DOCTOR AUGUSTE RICARD.

SIR, — I feel it my duty to declare to you that, in 1836, after having uselessly prescribed to a patient all the preparations of Foxglove, the thought struck me, for the first time, to have recourse to your Syrup. I did so, and it soon brought the patient to a quick and unexpected recovery. Several similar cases have presented themselves since in my practice, and thus, lead and encouraged by many exceptional observations, I now give the preference to your Syrup and Granules in all cases that require the sedative action of Foxglove.

If I had not been thoroughly convinced and assured of the sedative action of your Syrup in complaints of the heart, a success recently obtained in one of the members of my family would have banished all doubt from my mind. It is under the influence of that impression that I affirm upon my honour the truth of the above facts.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my esteem, and at the same time the respects of your devoted servant,

GREMILLY, D. M. P.

SIR,—I have not the honour of knowing you, but I know the Foxglove Syrup that you prepare; I recommend it to my patients in all cases in which Foxglove is essential. That habit in my practice is not a fantastical whim, but the result of numerous experiments which have taught me that, of all the manners of administering this plant, your Syrup is one of the most advantageous. I have expressed that opinion every time I have had an opportunity, and I give it to you, Sir, and to all those to whom you would wish to communicate it, as being maturely considered.

Accept, Sir, the homage of my consideration, and reckon upon me whenever you shall have to sustain the justice and truth of my assertion.

GAUBERT,

Formerly physician to the Medical Relief Office, Physician of the Ministry of the Interior and prisons of the Seine, Chevalier of the Royal Order of the Legion of Honour, etc.

SIR, — Before I had a knowledge of your Syrup, I had nearly abandoned all Foxglove preparations (powder, watery extract, alcoholic tincture, etc.) on account of their deleterious action on the stomach. Having assured myself since of the innocuousness of your preparation to the organ of digestion, I have not ceased to prescribe it: 1st, in recent and chronic affections of the heart, active and passive aneurism, palpitations of all kinds, though the period of acuteness is past; 2nd, in colds, catarrhs and asthmas; in a word, in all cases of deranged circulation and respiration, my patients have felt great relief from it.

It often happens that I advise my brother practitioners to prescribe it for their patients, and all have thanked me for apprising them of it.

I hope, Sir, that this declaration, of my experience, may be serviceable to you, and I forward it with pleasure.

BAZIGNAN, M. D. P.,

Private professor of accouchement.

SIR, —I have particularly employed your Foxglove Syrup for palpitations of the heart, non-organic, and, in those circumstances, I am able to state in a very decided manner that a remarkable lowering of the pulse and a marked diminution in the force of the impulsion of the heart has taken place. Even in organic affections, the same advantages have been obtained.

E. BEAUGRAND,

Physician of the Medical Relief Office.

I hereby certify that, since I have had occasion to make use of Mr. La-

bélonye's Foxglove Syrup, I have always found it to possess all the properties by which Foxglove acts upon the animal economy. I shall only add that the administration of this Syrup has appeared to me much more convenient for the patients than that of the other preparations of this plant, and that it has never given rise to those accidents which I have many times witnessed from their use.

MAILLY,

Physician of the Hôpital de la Pitié.

SIR, — I have used your Syrup for a long time with confidence, because I have observed that in its sedative action it far excels all the other preparations of Foxglove.

The opinion that I here give, Sir, is based upon numerous facts which cannot leave any doubt as to its superiority.

CARTEAUX,

*Physician attached to the Ministry of Public Works,
Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.*

Every practical physician has remarked the physiological action of Foxglove (*digitalis purpurea*) on the animal economy; its effects in calming irritability, relieving spasmodic attacks of the heart, and abating the circulatory movements and urinary secretions have been fully established. I declare to have obtained the happiest results from the administration of the Foxglove Syrup, prepared by Mr. Labélonye, among the numerous patients affected with palpitations of the heart and serous infiltrations; having had hydrothorax myself, I can only attribute my cure to the use of his Syrup.

THERRIN,

Formerly principal Surgeon of the Army, chief Surgeon of the Bourbonne Military Hospital, associate of the Royal Academy of Medicine, officer of the Legion of Honour.

I, the undersigned, certify that the Purple Foxglove having incontestably, among other virtues, that of augmenting secretions of the urine, I have several times prescribed the Foxglove Syrup that Mr. Labélonye has, I believe, invented, and it has given the most satisfactory results that I could possibly desire.

FOUQUIER,

First physician of the late Louis Philippe, clinical professor to the Faculty of Medicine, member of the Royal Academy of Medicine, etc.

SIR, — I have frequently administered your Foxglove Syrup with the best results in affections of the heart, and in many cases of asthma caused by the organic disease of that organ; in some special affections of the kidneys I have obtained the same; an abatement of the beating of the pulse, a diminution, sometimes a cessation of the palpita-

tions and pains in the region of the heart, an augmentation of the urinary secretions, etc.

I think you have rendered great service to humanity by the preparation of your Syrup, always so easily administered and kept on the stomach, especially with children.

Allow me to thank you for it.

BONNEAU,

Physician to the Children's Hospital.

SIR, — I have indisputably recognised a very powerful and efficacious action of your Foxglove preparations in those cases in which it is necessary to augment the urinary secretions. I always employ them in such circumstances with the greatest confidence. It gives me satisfaction to certify my opinion in this respect.

MARCHAND,

Physician of the Tuileries Palace.

To render homage to truth, I am bound to say I have frequently prescribed for many years Mr. Labélonye's Foxglove Syrup, that a very decided sedative effect has nearly always followed its administration, and even at the present time, I have two patients suffering from pulmonary consumption, who find themselves much relieved by the use of his Syrup.

JOSEPH RICQUES,

Surgeon-Major 3rd Legion, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

SIR, — I am anxious to reply to the question that you have addressed to me relative to the effects of your Foxglove Syrup.

I have used your Syrup in a considerable number of cases of organic affections of the heart, and I now declare that, save some very rare exceptions, its sedative action has always been the most easy and evident. It is not one of those medicines whose effects are wellnigh imperceptible; it is sufficient for any one to count with care, on several successive days, the pulse of the patient to whom this Syrup is administered, to ascertain that it possesses a decidedly sedative action over the circulation. I do not think, Sir, that any one can raise the least doubt in this respect.

Accept, etc.,

LÉMAIRE, D. M. P.,

Clinical chief of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris.

SIR, — You ask me to add my portion of truth on the use of your Foxglove Syrup, whose advantages have been proved in certain localities.

Without entering into any discussion, I declare that I have prescribed it, and even daily, with the greatest success.

In that I agree with my honourable co-practitioners who have had, as well as myself, to prescribe it for their patients, and who have only had to praise its good effects.

Accept, Sir, my sincere salutations,

SERRURIER, D. M. P.,

General Secretary of the Practical Medical Society.

SIR, — In reply to the request that you make, I declare that I have often used your Foxglove Syrup, and that constantly I have obtained very good effects from it. I ought still further to say, to state the truth, that in the most tiresome coughs, which torment so cruelly consumptive persons in the last stage of that complaint, after having uselessly prescribed all the other calming remedies, I have obtained very good results from the sedative action of your Foxglove Syrup; it has equally succeeded in suffocating and asthmatical coughs. I hope that this attestation, dictated by a sense of justice, may be useful to you.

I have the honour to be yours truly,

RATHERY, D. M. P.

I have frequently employed Mr. Labélonye's preparations of Foxglove, and have ascertained beyond all doubt that they are active and most useful medicaments, whether employed as diuretics, or to moderate the strength and frequency of the pulse.

MARJOLIN,

*Professor to the Paris Faculty of Medicine, Head-Surgeon
of the Beaujon Hospital.*

Foxglove, whether taken in the form of powder or infusion, usually moderates the contractions of the heart, and at the same time weakens and regularizes them, but this peculiar effect is seldom obtained without consequences more or less disagreeable, such as incessant vomiting, tendency to faint, or actual fainting, excessive purging, etc.

..... Your Syrup is preferable in my opinion, because it produces *the peculiar effects of the Foxglove* without causing any of the inconveniences attending the use of the watery extract, even when weak and prepared with cold water; or any of the more unpleasant consequences accompanying the other preparations of Foxglove, all of which I have entirely relinquished in favour of yours for some years past.

ROUSSER (de Vallière),

Physician to the Deaf and Dumb School.

In every case for which I have prescribed *Labélonye's Syrup of Foxglove*, I have found a sensible diminution in the arterial pulsations. The

contractions of the heart, from being loud and strong as they were at the beginning of the treatment, an irrefragable proof of hypertrophy with dilatation, soon declined to their normal strength and sound. In a recent instance, having to treat a stricture of the orifices of the heart with a dilatation of the aorta, which was evident from the intermittence and irregularity of its beating. I had every reason to be satisfied with using it, and in fine, whenever I have administered it for nervous palpitations in young females, the results have been invariably the same; whence I conclude that your Syrup not only possesses the recognized virtues of Foxglove, but also has one of its own, namely, that it can be supported by all stomachs, which is not the case with the other preparations of Foxglove.

A. POINTIS,

*Physician to the Medical Relief Office and Member
of several Learned Societies.*

I feel bound to inform you that on the different occasions in which I have had recourse to your *Syrup of Foxglove*, I have obtained good effects. In my experience, this Syrup has contributed either to diminish, in a perceptible degree, the increased activity of the heart, or to favour general absorption in cases of dropsy.

I therefore willingly bear witness that this Syrup is endowed with properties so characteristic that it may be classed among the most reliable of pharmaceutical preparations.

PUYOO, M. D.,

Of the Faculty of Paris.

For more than six years past I have employed *Labélonye's Syrup of Foxglove* in my practice. I can therefore testify that it possesses all the properties of Foxglove, that it is easily administered, and much better supported by stomachs in general than the other preparations of that plant. It has a sedative action on the heart, the beating of which it gradually moderates; it also increases the urinary secretion, as I have ascertained during an experience of six years.

DOCTOR PATIN,

*Physician of the Medical Relief Office, Inspector
of Mineral Waters of Paris.*

It appears from these testimonials that *Labélonye's Syrup and Granules of Foxglove* possess all the virtues of Foxglove, whether employed as diuretics or sedatives, and that if the eminent physicians just cited deem them preferable to all other preparations of that plant, it is because they are never attended with any of the inconveniences so frequently occasioned by the latter, owing to their deleterious action on the stomach.

These two preparations are on the contrary exceedingly easy to administer, even to children, who take them without the least difficulty.

From the cases mentioned by the eminent practitioners above-quoted, it is manifest that most favourable results are obtained from these medicines in affections of the lungs, in catarrhs and chronic asthmas, neglected colds, nervous bronchitis, hooping-cough, etc., hydrothorax, or dropsy of the chest, and all dropsical affections whether partial or general.

An incipient dropsy speedily disappears under their action combined with a proper diet.

My attention has also been called to several cases of hemoptysis (spitting of blood) and aphony (loss of voice), which were cured by their use.

But it is more especially against diseases of the heart that they are employed with almost constant success. Palpitations, by whatever cause produced, are calmed by them in a very few days, and the effect is so much the more speedy if the palpitations are accompanied by an over-active circulation or great irritability of the nervous system.

We will conclude with quoting the opinions expressed by two scientific journals.

(From the **Dix-Neuvième Siècle** for June 1846.)

“ Of all the plants comprised in our *Materia Medica*, Foxglove is one of those whose physiological effects have been observed with most care; its exciting action on the stomach and kidneys, its sedative action on the heart, have caused it to be regarded as one of the most important productions of the vegetable kingdom, and have induced many chemists to undertake its analysis. We have no intention here to enter upon the discussions, at times angry and contradictory, to which the study of this substance has given rise among French and foreign therapeutists; we merely intend in this article to show its salutary action on the economy, and indicate the different manners of administering it.

“ Till recently, it has usually been administered in three principal forms: in powder, as an infusion, or as a tincture. These three modes of administering Foxglove present several inconveniences: first they render the rather strong taste of the plant more perceptible to the patient's palate; secondly, they occasion nausea and retching, which are equally injurious and painful; and, lastly, they diminish, if they do not altogether change, its medicinal properties.

“ Fully sensible of the importance of remedying these inconveniences, in order to facilitate the use of Foxglove, and render its applications more numerous, a Paris pharmacian, Mr. Labélonie, after devoting particular attention to the study of this plant, has demonstrated that these forms should be rejected, and that the alcoholic extract, prepared with alcohol at 56 degrees (centigrade), should be employed in preference, as representing in a certain manner the different principles to which its medicinal properties may be attributed. This chemist has had the happy idea of preparing a syrup with this extract in the proportions of three-fourths of a grain in an ounce of syrup, and granules each containing three-tenths of a grain of the same extract. It is manifest that admi-

nistered in these two forms equally agreeable to take and easy to dose, Foxglove constitutes the most certain and most convenient means we have for combating a multitude of different affections, among which we may mention :

“ 1. *Organic diseases of the heart.* By its sedative action it regularizes the throbbing and too frequent pulsation of that organ; and against this affection it is most frequently used.

“ 2. *In acute dropsies, not encysted.* Its eminently diuretic action has shown, ever since it was first tried as a medicine, the great advantages to be derived from its use.

“ 3. *Asthma.* When this disease is owing to the infiltration of the lungs.

“ 4. *Consumption.* It is especially in this disease that Foxglove has been prescribed by English physicians.

“ 5. *Scrofula.* Many practitioners have successfully employed this medicine against scrofulous swellings and tabes mesenterica.

“ 6. *Inflammations.* The power of Foxglove in moderating the circulation very naturally suggested the idea that it might be useful in these affections, which are always accompanied by greater rapidity in the motion of the blood.

“ 7. *Nervous bronchitis, colds, chronic catarrhs.* Several physicians have obtained most beneficial effects from the use of this plant against these different complaints.”

(From the **France Médicale.** 1856.)

“ Since the attention of the profession has been more especially directed to Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and its preparations by a series of important investigations and experiments, there are few of our brethren who have not had opportunities of appreciating the advantages offered in medical practice by LABELONYE'S SYRUP OF FOXGLOVE.

“ Eighteen years' experience by the physicians of all countries prove that LABELONYE'S SYRUP possesses all the properties of Foxglove without any of the inconveniences attending the other preparations of that plant.

“ It is well known that *Digitaline*, the diuretic action of which has been long disputed and is far from being proved, sometimes induces serious consequences, and that the other preparations, such as powders, pills, and tinctures, fatigue the stomach and cause nausea, sometimes followed by retching.

“ LABELONYE'S SYRUP, on the contrary is perfectly innocuous to the organs of digestion, and this allows of its being administered without fear of bad consequences in inflammatory affections of the lungs, against which its action is often very remarkable.

“ It possesses in a high degree the sedative and diuretic qualities of Foxglove, and a great many physicians have proved its beneficial effects upon their own persons in diseases of the heart both organic and inorganic; aneurisms active and passive, hypertrophy, palpitations of all kinds, and in several kinds of dropsy, especially dropsy in the chest.

“ It is likewise employed with great success against hemoptysis, nervous bronchitis, asthma, and catarrh, in a word, against all derangements of the circulation.”

The legality of the sale of my Syrup and Granules of Foxglove, their efficacy and superiority over all other preparations of the kind have been established by several judgments of the Imperial Courts of France, given on the authority of reports made by commissions appointed for the purpose and composed of the most eminent members of the scientific world.

I will cite only a recent judgment of the Imperial Court of Toulouse :

“ Whereas the Codex (Official Pharmacopœia) contains a formula for the preparation of Syrup of Foxglove ;

“ Whereas, independently of this formula there exists another, by means of which the Syrup of Foxglove known as Labélonye’s is obtained ;

“ Whereas the latter has been inserted in several medical and pharmaceutical publications, and its efficacy has been attested by the declarations of the most respectable physicians and by its extensive use in practice ;

“ Whereas, however, that fact would not suffice to prevent its sale from being an infraction of the law, if the said Labélonye’s Syrup of Foxglove, were in reality quite different from that obtained by the formula in the Codex ;

“ But as it results from the evidence produced and the analyses made that the essential and constitutive principles of Labélonye’s Syrup are identical with those indicated by the Codex ; that both these syrups are composed of one and the same substance, an extract of Foxglove ; and that to this substance alone both Syrups owe their therapeutic properties ; while the difference between these two Syrups lies altogether in the manner of obtaining the substance composing them, viz. the active principles of the Foxglove plant ;

“ Whereas the difference in the means of extraction changes nothing in the essential principles of the remedy or in its virtues ;

“ It is evident that Labélonye’s process only deprives the Syrup of its disagreeable smell and acrid taste, at the same time that it secures greater uniformity in its composition and certainty in its effects ;

“ Consequently, far from constituting a new and secret remedy, the present investigation has proved that Labélonye’s Syrup is only *an ameliorated and improved form of an authorized medicament*, and as such is not amenable to the provisions of the law against secret remedies.”

The legality of the sale of the Granules was established by a judgment of the Imperial Court of Pau in November 1844.

They possess the same properties as the Syrup, as they are composed of exactly the same elements ; but being dry, instead of liquid, they are more convenient to carry, less liable to loss from breakage, and will keep good for any length of time. They consequently present great advan-

tages for exportation to hot climates, to countries where customs dues are levied by weight, and to many inland districts where communications are difficult and conveyance expensive.

The Syrup, however, will bear long sea-voyages without losing any of its virtues.

MODE OF EMPLOYING

Labélonye's Syrup and Granules of Foxglove.

The usual dose of *Syrup* is from *two* to *three* table-spoonfuls (10 to 15 drams) daily, to be taken at equal intervals in the following manner: one spoonful in the morning, the second about noon, and the third in the evening, being always careful to take it at least one hour before a meal, or two hours after.

If in the course of eight or ten days no perceptible improvement is felt, one or two spoonfuls more may be taken daily without inconvenience, by shortening the intervals between the doses; but it is very seldom that more than four spoonfuls a day are required.

The dose for the *Granules*, is from *four* to *ten* a day, beginning with two in the morning and two in the evening, and increasing each dose by one Granule every two days, but it is seldom necessary to take more than *ten* in a day.

However, in certain serious affections of the heart, or in dropsies, when it is desirable to determine an abundant secretion of urine, the dose may be gradually increased to *twelve* or even *sixteen* daily, to be taken at three or four times, but at least one hour before a meal or two hours after.

It is advisable to take the Syrup diluted with two or three spoonfuls of warm water or weak tea for persons subject to nervous palpitations; infusion of mallows or hyssop in cases of bronchitis, hooping-cough, asthma, or catarrh; any diuretic infusion may be used in dropsical affections.

After each dose of the Granules, the patient should drink half a cup of weak tea or some herb infusion, as above recommended.

For children, the doses vary according to age. Under seven years of age, from *one* to *four* tea-spoonfuls daily; else *one* or *two* granules; from seven to ten, *three* or *four* half-tablespoonfuls of syrup, or from *two* to *four* granules, to be taken as above directed for adults, in the intervals between the meals.

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