

CASES ILLUSTRATING THE  
EFFECTS OF BELLADONNA IN  
NEURALGIA.

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THE following notes of two cases tend to confirm the announcements of Dr. Hutchinson on the use of belladonna in neuralgic affections of the face, in *THE LANCET* for Sept., 1843, p. 830, and to confirm its efficacy in certain cases of that distressing malady.

CASE 1.—J. W., ætat. 40, labourer, dark complexion, of spare and rather intemperate habits, had suffered from severe occasional pain over right lower jaw and right temple for upwards of six weeks previous to July 1, 1837, at which time he applied to me. Complained of severe neuralgic pain in the face, as above stated, coming on *gradually* at irregular intervals, and lasting several hours at a time; considerable nausea; tongue coated with brown fur; bowels disordered. Considering the overloaded state of the alimentary canal the cause of *pain*, I ordered an emetic and afterwards croton oil.

July 2. No relief; pain more constant.

3. Violent paroxysm of pain came on this morning. Ordered half a grain of extract of belladonna every two hours until relieved. The third dose produced giddiness, dimness of sight, &c.; the pain was instantly relieved.

4. No pain of consequence. Ordered not to repeat the belladonna unless the pain was very severe.

5. Rather more pain, of a lancinating kind, and in different parts of the face. To repeat the dose of extract every four hours until relieved. Two doses were taken and the pain left.

10. Has had no pain since last report; is weak; in other respects quite well.

CASE 2.—Mr. D., ætat. 23, pallid countenance, susceptible of cold, but otherwise enjoys general good health, has had severe darting neuralgic pains in the course of the left supra-orbital nerve during the last two months. For the last two days the pain has come on much more severe than usually, accompanied by dimness of sight on the affected side.

Sept. 5, 1837. This morning pain came on at seven o'clock in a very severe form. Ordered one grain of extract of belladonna, to be repeated in three hours if not relieved.

6. Has taken the belladonna; very much relieved; has no pain in the course of the same nerve; suffering slight dizziness from the effects of the medicine; slight pain in the right side of the face. To repeat one grain of the extract in the evening.

7. Quite free from pain; in other respects much better.

12. Has taken a dose of aperient medicine; suffers no pain, and feels quite well.

*Remarks.*—Thus we see a confirmation of the observations made at the General Hospital, Nottingham, and I feel convinced that, where the cases are well selected, the greatest benefit may be expected from the use of belladonna in certain neuralgic affections.

While on the subject of belladonna, allow me to call the attention of the profession to its use in frictions around the orbit, in combination with mercurial ointment, in cases of rheumatic ophthalmia, iritis, or any other inflammation of the eye. The remedy, I know, is in general use, but I have found, from personal experience, that to reap the full benefit, it should be well rubbed into the part every two hours, washing the former application off and rubbing the part well with a piece of flannel, before the next application of the ointment; by this means an erythematous eruption is soon produced, absorption is much more rapid, and the effect is much quicker and more efficacious than when applied in the ordinary manner.

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TREATMENT OF PURPURA.—Prof. Sacchero, of Turin, advises as follows:—Considering the pathological condition in purpura to consist in an undue excitement of the venous system, which in severe cases may proceed to phlebitis,—if fever be present the patient ought to be bled frequently, in proportion to the toleration of bleeding by the system. If visceral congestion be suspected, apply leeches to the anus. Administer agents tending directly to depress the circulation, as digitalis, aconite, lauro-cerasus, bitter almonds, ergot of rye, tartar emetic, saline purgatives, or calomel (if the three last be not contra-indicated by complications of gastritis or gastro-enteritis). Lemonade and other vegetable drinks to be used. If the affection were of a periodic nature, sulphate of quinine should be employed. Should debility, or an anæmic state ensue, full diet, with wine and milk, “to renew the elements of blood in the system,” are admissible.

LACERATED WOUNDS.—Hæmorrhage does not generally follow these, coagulation having soon taken place in the orifices of the injured blood-vessels. A boy was drawn by a machine-rope to a ceiling. His arm was torn off into another apartment, and his body fell to the ground. He recovered! There was no bleeding. As nerves have been injured, guard against tetanus. In old people erysipelas may follow. This kind of wound is unfavourable for adhesion; attempt it, notwithstanding, by the first intention. Treat a lacerated wound as you would an incised wound. But against threatened tetanus or erysipelas use tepid anodyne lotions instead of the balsam dressing and cold application.—*Sir Charles Bell.*