

COTTON-WOOL AS A VEHICLE FOR MEDICATING THE NASAL REGION.

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DISEASES of the nose and post-nasal space have of late attracted a considerable share of attention, but scarcely perhaps so much as they deserve, considering the troublesome nature of the affections to which these regions are obnoxious, and especially how frequently in this climate they become the seat of chronic mischief as the sequence of ordinary catarrh. A great difficulty in dealing with such cases has been the want of a satisfactory means of applying medicaments to the post-nasal region with any prospect of maintaining them in contact with the diseased surfaces. The numerous washes, lotions, vapours, &c., respecting the application of which much ingenuity has been displayed, share alike in this respect, that their action is so temporary as to effect little more than a cleansing and disinfecting influence. Irrigation, however, in one or other of its forms will always play an indispensable part in the treatment of nasal and post-nasal diseases, for until incrustations and decomposing accumulations of muco-pus have been removed through its agency, little result would follow from more permanent applications.

Attempts have been made to overcome the difficulty of topically medicating these regions by mixing the drugs selected for the purpose with a gelatine basis, and introducing these in the form of conical-shaped bougies. Patients using them complain of the annoyance caused by their undergoing solution and trickling down the pharynx, producing cough and disturbance of rest. Nevertheless they have served a good purpose, and are still used by some practitioners. The insufflation of powders or medicated snuffs is sometimes adopted, but practically all these measures are insufficient for the purposes in view.

About three years ago, wishing to secure a better method of applying iodoform to the locality in question, I suggested its diffusion through cotton-wool in definite proportions. Pellets of this *iodoform wool*, introduced through the anterior nares, proved an efficacious mode of using the drug, and the practice has been extensively followed. It can be retained the required length of time without annoying the wearer, who is for the most part unconscious of its presence; it is removed when the douche is used. Encouraged by the success of this attempt, and aided by Mr. Bullock of Hanover-street, who perfected the preceding preparation, I have since adopted the method of diffusing a number of other drugs through cotton-wool for use in the nasal and post-nasal regions.

The method of applying medicated wool to the post-nasal space is very simple, and can be improvised under almost any circumstances. It is as follows. The quantity of wool determined upon, usually from two to three grains by weight, is twisted spindle-shaped, but loosely, upon a piece of thread or silk; the thin ends are brought together, and tied with a knot; thus the spindle-shaped pledget of wool is doubled upon itself, and secured firmly to the thread, having now a pear-shape, the stalk being represented by the thread. A blunt probe is engaged in the wool, and made to conduct it along the floor of the nose to the spot where it is to be retained. The process is then repeated on the other side, the threads from each pledget hanging out from either nostril. These are now tied together below the septum, by which means the patient will be assured the wool will not be swallowed. In the morning, supposing the application to be made overnight, they can be withdrawn by pulling on the threads. In this way any drug that may be selected can be introduced with ease, and with a little skill in the manipulation the vault of the pharynx, Rosenmüller's fossa, or the neighbourhood of the Eustachian tubes, may be topically medicated. If desired, several such pledgets may be introduced in succession, until a sufficient quantity has been placed *in situ*; the threads belonging to all can then be tied together, and secured.

The above process is so simple that I ought perhaps to apologise for dwelling on its details. It has, however, a practical bearing, inasmuch as it enables the patient to see for himself that the wool is withdrawn.

There are other advantages attending this use of medicated cotton-wool irrespective of the special virtue of the drug employed. Thus it absorbs discharge, and where necessary disinfects it. Further, when placed in the nasal meati (for which purpose it is unnecessary to attach it to a thread, as it will remain where it is placed), it exerts a beneficial mechanical support to the erectile-tissue-like arrangement of the vessels supplying the mucous membrane of the turbinated bones. It is this peculiar vascularity of the part which admits of the great swelling and profuse discharge often seen to occur quite suddenly in some patients. When the vessels of this structure have been repeatedly congested, their tendency is to remain permanently swollen, and against this issue the pressure exerted by the cotton-wool affords a curative influence, quite irrespective of the therapeutic action of the drug with which it is charged.

As my object in this communication is not to write a treatise on nasal therapeutics, but simply to place in the hands of the profession a ready method of carrying into effective practice the remedies they may themselves select, the further object of this communication will be answered by a brief statement of the formulæ of proved efficacy for the purposes in view.

Besides the iodoform wool already some time in use, the following will be found of most frequent utility:

ASTRINGENTS.

Perchloride-of-iron Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tr. fer. perchlor., one ounce.

Tannin Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tannin, one drachm; rectified spirit, six drachms.

Alum Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; alum, half a drachm; water, one ounce.

Rhatany-Kino-Catechu Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tr. catechu, vel kino, vel rhatany, one ounce.

Hamamelis Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tr. hamamelis, half an ounce.

ANTI-CATARRHAL.

Cubebs Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tr. cubebæ, one ounce.

ANTISEPTIC, DISINFECTANT, AND STIMULANT.

Camphor Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; æth. rect., one ounce.

Boric or Boracic Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; boric acid, one drachm; sp. vin. rect., six drachms.

Iodine Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tr. iod., half an ounce.

SEDATIVE.

Opium Wool.—Cotton-wool, one drachm; glycerine, ten minims; tr. opii, half an ounce.

General directions.—Mix the glycerine with the tincture or other solvent, saturate the wool with the liquid, and dry.

Since writing the above, I have had some preparations of salicylic and carbolic acid made on the same principle, but have as yet no experience of their usefulness to report.

A Mirror

OF

HOSPITAL PRACTICE, BRITISH AND FOREIGN.

Nulla autem est alia pro certo noscendi via, nisi quamplurimas et morborum et dissectionum historias, tum aliorum, tum proprias collectas habere, et inter se comparare.—MORGAGNI *De Sed. et Caus. Morb.*, lib. iv. Proœmium.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL.

A CASE OF SUPPURATIVE MENINGITIS AND ABSCESS OF THE BRAIN; REMARKS.

(Under the care of Mr. FIELD.)

S. G—, aged eighteen, an under-gardener at Goodwood-park, was admitted on Jan. 24th, 1880, with a purulent discharge from the right ear. He walked into the hospital, and stated that he had had a discharge from the ear for sixteen years, following scarlet fever. He had no paralysis