

CASE OF  
EXANTHEMA AND NARCOTISM,

*From the External Application of Hops.*

By JOHN BADHAM, M.D.

MARY BELL, æt. 14, and of a healthy habit of body, applied for advice, on the 26th of September last, for symptoms which, although on the decline, appeared to me even then of a sufficiently interesting character to deserve being detailed in my case-book; and as I have not been able to find a case of the kind recorded by any authors, English or foreign, I shall be glad to hear whether any of your correspondents have, in the course of their practice, met with a similar one. This little girl had been engaged in hop-picking for a week, during which she was in the enjoyment of perfect health.

On the morning of the 24th, there being a sharp frost at the time, her hands became chapped, and she put them into the hop-bin to warm them. Shortly after this, she began to feel a tingling or smarting sensation in the hands, as if she had been stung by nettles; and having frequent occasion to pass her hands over her forehead, to arrange her hair, the face became similarly affected. In a few hours afterwards, a distinct cuticular efflorescence appeared, accompanied with a strong disposition to sleep. When taken home, the feeling of somnolency was such as to require the constant vigilance of the family to keep her awake. Her vision was so much impaired that she could not distinguish between objects the most dissimilar; a plate of eels, for instance, appeared like mushrooms. Towards evening all efforts at rousing her attention failed, and she fell into a profound slumber. In the morning her face was covered with a deep erythema, and had swelled extensively; her eyes were quite closed by the tumefaction of the eyelids. She slept substantially through the whole of that day, but once or twice complained of pain in the forehead. Opening medicines were administered, but failed in procuring a stool. On the evening of this day the hands and face were literally covered with vesicles, some of considerable, some of lesser size, which, continuing to grow larger, at length began to burst, first in the hands, then in the face. After this a considerable

mitigation in all the symptoms took place; the face became reduced in size, and a healthy desquamation soon followed. The eyes, which had suffered from the attack, though less inflamed, were still red, on the fourth day, when she presented herself to me; and there was also an appearance of *small scales* on the face and forehead; elsewhere the desquamation was general; the erythema was dying away, but a thin ichorous discharge kept oozing from small abraded patches between the fingers. She still had headache, and appeared heavy, but was evidently convalescing without medicine: however, as her bowels were confined, I gave her saline purgatives, with the addition of a little nitre and sulphur, and ordered the hands to be dusted with some absorbent powder. These means, with the additional aid of a dose of calomel and colocynth, completed the cure which had already been commenced by nature.

The interest of this case appears to consist, first, in its appearing to prove the physiological fact of cutaneous absorption; and, secondly, because it discovers a new and hitherto unsuspected acrid principle in the hop.

Workshop, Notts,  
Oct. 1834.

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HYDROTHORAX AND HEART  
DISEASE,  
AS CONNECTED WITH  
RHEUMATIC AFFECTION.

*To the Editor of the Medical Gazette.*  
SIR,

DURING the last thirty years I have often observed that persons who, in early life, have been subject to rheumatic inflammation, have frequently, at a later period, suffered from disease of the heart, and sometimes of the pericardium, not infrequently producing hydro-pericardii; and when neglected, or not properly treated, hydrothorax and general anasarca have set in, attended by all the distressing symptoms usually connected with them. In some instances I have seen gouty inflammation produce disease of the heart, which, though little noticed during life, has yet ended in sudden death. The only symptoms complained of during life have been, perhaps, a little shortness of breathing on extra exertion, or some slight sense