

AN UNUSUAL CASE OF DIFFUSE OEDEMA SIMULATING SCLERODERMA

J. Allen Harrison, M.D., Philadelphia, PA.

65. During the month of October, while attending a lady in confinement, I was asked by her to examine her mother, Mrs. F., a stout woman, aet. about 50.

On examination, I found an erythema of the skin, covering the posterior part of the neck and shoulders ; the skin was thickened and so firm and rigid that an impression with the finger was almost impossible and only with great difficulty could the skin be lifted from the underlying tissues.

The case was diagnosed as one of the scleroderma and treated accordingly, but the case gradually grew worse, despite our efforts, extending anteriorly, affecting the chest, causing the breasts to become unusually firm and hard for a woman of her years ; the erythema was not marked, except posteriorly, very little being noticeable on the anterior portion of the chest. The breathing was interfered with to a marked extent. Abdominal walls and upper part of both arms were also affected. The face was not affected to any marked degree.

Dr. E.M. Gramm saw the case with me on November 22nd, and while agreeing with me in regard to the case being one of exceeding interest and variety, diagnosed it a diffuse oedema of the skin.

Urinanalysis was negative. For the treatment we now induced free diuresis and prescribed Apis internally.

The result was very good ; at this writing only a spot about the size of a dollar remaining at original site. The case seemed to me to be of sufficient interest to warrant mention.

The Action of Apis on the Skin : The face is red, swollen and hot, and smart sympathetic fever is set up. The nose is swollen, red and oedematous, so also are the lips. The whole appearance is perfectly typical of some cases of Erysipelas, especially so if it is traumatic erysipelas. Dr. Bojanus, the eminent Russian surgeon, has learned to feel the greatest confidence in its remedial powers in these cases. Dr. Hughes quote him as saying : "Since we have fully known the virtues of this remedy we have undertaken plastic operations with much more confidence, all fear of bad results from erysipelas being removed". It must be distinctly understood that Apis is not a remedy for all cases of Erysipelas. Belladonna, Rhus, Lachesis and Arsenic are all equally with Apis called for in certain forms of this disease. That to which Apis is homoeopathic is not the smooth, red shining skin of Belladonna with a minimum of swelling and a maximum of febrile excitement ; it is not the somewhat dusky swelling of Rhus with a tendency to the formation of bullae here and there and typhoid-like febrile symptoms ; neither is it the livid-coloured swelling utterly-asthenic condition, and gangrenous tendency in which Lachesis or Crotalus and Arsenic are required ; but true oedematous erysipelas, when with a moderate amount of febrile excitement, you have considerable swelling, bright, but not brilliantly red, and tending to become dusky, pitting deeply on pressure and extending over the face, nose eyes and head.

Repeatedly has a bee-sting or the taking of the bee-virus through the mouth been followed by a widely-spread eruption, closely resembling urticaria, attended with burning, stinging and itching. As remedy in most cases of urticaria, it has few, if any equals. It is also useful in some cases of Erythema Nodosum.

[*Courtesy : The Hahnemannian Monthly, 1895*].

