

4 - Carbolic acid - Paris Green - Belladonna

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CASES OF POISONING.*

BY J. C. MITCHELL, M.B., *Surgeon-General*

It was my fortune to have the responsibility of three cases of poisoning devolve upon me, within a year; and as such are comparatively rare, in the ordinary routine of a country practice, I thought a record of the symptoms actually observed, and the treatment used, might be interesting—if not instructive—to the members of this Association.

Case I.—Mrs. S., a widow lady, *murderer* at 58 years, living three-fourths of a mile from my office, was on the 19th November, 1881 preparing to retire for the night, at 10.30, p.m. She was troubled with rheumatism, and by mistake took a large dessert spoonful of pure carbolic acid, instead of the remedy to which she usually resorted. She at once cried out, "I have taken the wrong medicine for it is burning my throat and my stomach dreadfully." Her daughter immediately discovered the mistake, and gave the alarm, I was speedily summoned to attend and was with the patient fifteen minutes after she had taken the acid. I found her in a partial stupor, talking somewhat deliriously, great muscular relaxation, weak thready pulse, cold clammy skin, pupils of eyes slightly contracted, breathing becoming of a stertorous character. The

invasion of the symptoms had been very rapid.

Previous to my arrival, the daughter had given an emetic of mustard without any effect. With some difficulty I aroused her sufficiently to drink four ounces of olive oil (all I had with me), when she recovered consciousness. I then prepared and administered an emetic of sulphate of zinc, which acted quickly and thoroughly; and soon left no doubt in our minds, as to the nature of the poison, as the atmosphere of the room was strongly impregnated with the odor of carbolic acid.

After the emesis had ceased, we gave her demulcent drinks, applied heat to the body, and had the satisfaction of leaving her in a couple of hours in a fair way to recovery. The posterior and central portion of tongue were hardened and corrugated by contact with the acid. The tongue and throat speedily healed; the stomach remained very irritable for a length of time.

Case II.—Mr. V., at 49 years, a respectable farmer living five miles from our village indulged frequently in the use of intoxicants. At 9 p.m., Sunday, September 3rd, 1882, when under the influence of liquor he mixed half a tea-cupful of the ordinary commercial Paris-green—acetoarsenite of copper—with water, and before any of the family were aware of his intention, swallowed the greater portion of the mixture. In an hour after I was with him. He was sensible, suffering very acutely at intervals from severe epigastric and abdom-

* Read at the Ontario Medical Association Meeting, Toronto, June 6th, 1883.