

Sometimes we meet with neuritis for which no cause can be assigned beyond the possible injurious influence of exposure to cold or wet. In 1878, I treated a youth, 19 years of age, at the General Hospital, who belonged in this category. There was no history of syphilis or injury, nor any symptoms indicating brain trouble. He attributed his eye trouble to working in a cold, draughty shop, and being often suddenly chilled after becoming heated at his work. The eye presented the ordinary characters of a moderately developed neuro-retinitis, with great impairment of vision. Under the use of mercury and iodide of potassium, in pretty full doses, the nerves cleared up, and vision was considerably improved when he left the Hospital. I have not seen the case since, though he promised to come as an out-patient if vision was not in a satisfactory condition. It has been said that very great swelling of the optic papilla, amounting to more than four dioptries, is diagnostic of brain tumor, and that white spots about the macula, having a stellate arrangement like the well-known picture of Bright's Retina, indicates a chronic meningitis.

Some time ago I treated a young gentleman for optic neuritis, with swelling amounting to five dioptries, and about the macula the exact picture of Bright's Retina, the entire disease disappearing under the use of mercury inunctions and iodide of potash, in very large doses, for a month or more; about 300 grains of potash were taken daily. Although the optic nerves are now decidedly atrophic in appearance, vision remains almost unimpaired. In this case the disease was undoubtedly some form of brain syphilis. The visual trouble had been preceded by several weeks of intense headache, which also speedily subsided under treatment.

The more I see of optic neuritis, the more I am convinced that Hughlings Jackson struck the key-note of its treatment when he said the only remedies we can rely upon are mercury and iodide of potash in full doses. Doubtless there are many cases which will terminate disastrously, no matter what plan of treatment is pursued; but, on the other hand, a fair proportion will yield to these drugs, and if taken in time an otherwise incurable blindness may be averted by inducing absorption of the