

which the neurotic or hysterical invalid has often been accustomed to, with storms and calms—the storms of emotional excitement and ill-regulated neurotic displays of mental energy and temper; the ‘calms’ representing subsequent exhaustion. The systematic rest ‘with a purpose,’ is very different. It calms the emotions, rests the mind and steadies the brain, so that the patient is transformed from a bundle of fretful irritated nerve centres, which she is unable to control, into a moderately self-possessed rational human being, who is frequently only too glad to exchange the monotony of her bed-life for something more active and unselfish.

I would preface my notes by remarking that the patient was nursed at a small private Hospital, to which Dr. Weir Mitchell was accustomed to send his patients.

Mrs. E. T. V., aged 38, admitted on December 16th. Suffering from nervous exhaustion complicated by rectal atony which necessitated the constant use of purgatives or enemata. Patient extremely excitable, restless, suspicious, and apt to be violent in temper, bronzed and sallow; normally muscular and largely made, somewhat emaciated and flesh flabby. Ordered regular rest treatment, and put on House diet, without red meat.

‘House diet’ consisted of large breakfast cup of chocolate 6.30 a.m., taken lying down. If constipation troublesome, cup of black coffee without sugar was substituted for the chocolate. Breakfast followed at 8 a.m. and consisted of porridge or hominy with cream, bacon, eggs, fish or chops with toast, and often two tumblers of milk either hot or cold. Patients were allowed as much as they could possibly take. Beef-tea and milk were served at frequent intervals between breakfast and dinner, which came at 12.30. Fish, chicken, meat with stewed fruit, custard, or ice-cream, were served at this meal. Milk was given between this and 7 p.m. supper, which was generally cold, and very much the same as the dinner.

December 17th.—Patient put to bed, four ounces of milk every two hours. House diet in addition. Bromate of potassium 5 grs. four times daily to control restlessness. Nurse instructed to see that patient took ten minutes to drink each portion of milk, thereby making it more digestible.

19th.—Very fractious; rebels against all treatment; takes food fairly well, but complains of everything.

20th.—So troublesome that ‘complete rest’ (in contradistinction to ‘regular rest’) ordered. This means she is not to speak, or move, or feed herself. Bromide substituted for the bromate. Faradic battery to every muscle daily (the battery was applied, orders given that ‘no current’ was to be established. Her condition did not call for electricity, but the battery was applied for its *moral* effect). Massage fifty minutes daily.

23rd.—Patient somewhat calmer, but very revengeful and suspicious. Constipation troublesome. One teaspoonful of bran three times daily in one of her glasses of milk, two teaspoonfuls of castor oil every night.

29th.—Sleepless and excitable. Solid food discontinued. Put on a diet of peptonised milk (forty-eight ounces daily) to be increased gradually. Massage seems to add to excitability. Discontinued temporarily. The milk diet was ordered chiefly because it has a noticeably sleepy effect for the first week or two that it is taken exclusively.

January 11th.—Patient improving under peptonised milk diet. Bowels acting somewhat better. Bran

and castor oil discontinued. A slight Faradic current ordered (at this date the *real* current was given). Massage ordered to be continued, but only for ten minutes at first, gradually increasing five minutes daily.

18th.—Patient now taking seventy ounces peptonised milk daily. Ordered a small piece of bread and butter three times daily. Massage full time of fifty minutes daily with *hard* rubbing. Patient had hitherto taken the regular warm sponge bath given in bed, one hour before massage, but she complained, as such patients frequently do, that it was very fatiguing, so it was ordered to be given on alternate days.

25th.—Patient by this time was on full House diet, but as she complained that milk caused acidity, it was still given to her peptonised. Bowels again troublesome. Enema ordered every evening of ten ounces of linseed tea (patient was instructed to *retain the enema all night*; the bowel was washed out next morning by the injection of one quart of hot water). Galvanism to rectum ten minutes daily.

29th.—Patient complains of mysterious pains in right shoulder and elbow. Thoroughly blistered in evening. During the night, according to the testimony of a fellow patient, she got up and finished the contents of the bottle of blistering fluid in producing various blisters and ‘streaks’ on different parts of the body. This wholesale self-blistering appeared to have a salutary effect on her health and temper, for she rapidly improved from this date. Her appetite was good, the rectal trouble much relieved, and the patient went home some two weeks later, having been for several short walks in an adjoining square. Dr. Mitchell diagnosed the case as ‘hysteria’ accompanied by some amount of nervous exhaustion.

Prior to her treatment she had not walked for about a year, and her temper and disposition were painted in a very unenviable light by her many relations. With the improvement of her condition we were not struck by much progress towards amiability, but, on the whole, we were fairly satisfied with the case and its result.”

Registered Nurses' Society.



THE Monthly Meeting of the Committee of the Registered Nurses' Society took place at 20, Upper Wimpole Street, on Tuesday, at 5 p.m., Mr. Fardon in the chair, when a most satisfactory report was received of the first year's work of the Society. The resignations of Miss Bertha Burch and Miss Hope Archer were received, the former upon her marriage, and the latter upon her appointment as Charge Nurse at the Chelsea Hospital for Women.

It was decided to hold a public annual meeting of the Society early in July, when an account of the *raison d'être* and work of the Society will be presented.

It was considered advisable not to add to the number of the staff during the summer months, as the competition for work amongst private Nurses is already sufficiently keen, but the Hon. Superintendent will continue to see candidates at 12, Holles Street, Cavendish Square, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings, between the hours of 11 and 1, preparatory to increasing the staff in the autumn.

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