

A Case of Nerve Exhaustion.

BY NURSE B. L. C.

MRS. G. B., aged 27, married, one child, no miscarriages; husband of no occupation. Since her confinement, four years ago, which was a very difficult one, and instrumental, she has never been well. She had a great shock and much family trouble about two years ago, and ever since then has been steadily wasting, until now she is exceedingly thin. She is 5 feet 10 inches in height, but only weighs 6 stone 10½ lbs. She is very weak and languid, and says it is impossible for her to walk. Her limbs are extremely wasted, and seem only skin and bone, and over the hips the skin is so tight that it almost seems as if the bones were pressing through. She says that when she takes any food it makes her sick, and causes her great pain, and that therefore she refrains from nourishment as far as possible. She has hardly been out of bed for eighteen months, and when she attempts to stand up, immediately falls down.

The doctor says that "there is no uterine disease except a very lacerated condition of the cervix, and that there is no disease in any other organ." On January 15, 1894, the patient was removed to lodgings and placed under my charge by Dr. X. (who permits me to publish the case), and it was arranged that a masseuse should come twice a day to rub her. The temperature of the room was to be kept at 64°, and it was to be kept well ventilated. On January 15, her friends wished her good-bye, as the doctor insisted upon her being completely isolated, and after the departure of the last she seemed extremely exhausted. The treatment was commenced at once, and it required, as may be supposed, a considerable amount of trouble at first to induce her to take any food at all. I told her that I was most anxious for her sake to get her well, and that the doctor would be most annoyed with me if I did not scrupulously carry out his instructions, so I hoped that she would help me to do my duty, and to get her quite well. I told her that I had had patients under the doctor who were quite as bad as she was, and who under this treatment had got perfectly strong and well; and by talking to her in this way I soon gained her confidence and made her feel that she must obey the doctor's instructions. That being done, I persuaded her to take some warm milk. She did this reluctantly, asserting it would make her very sick. She sipped it very slowly, and in about half an hour had drunk four ounces. Then she retched a great deal and became very exhausted, but did not vomit any of the milk. I placed a mustard leaf over her

stomach, in accordance with the instructions of the doctor in such cases, telling her that this would certainly prevent further sickness, and she did not retch any more. She slept from 9 p.m. until 2 a.m., when she awoke, and I persuaded her to take another half tumblerful of warm milk. She retched violently again and brought up just a little curdled milk, but another mustard leaf, which reddened the skin over the epigastrium, stopped this.

January 16.—Temperature 97°; pulse 90; respirations 24; temperature of room 64°. Patient has slept very well during the night, since 3 o'clock, and says she has had a better night than she has had for months. I tell her she looks better and brighter already, and when the doctor comes, he says the same. She took, at 8 o'clock, a small cup of tea with a good deal of cream in it, a thin slice of bread and butter, and some honey. She was not at all sick, and only retched a very little. At 12 o'clock she took four ounces of strong beef tea, at 4 o'clock she had a glass of milk and a thin piece of bread and butter. At 7 o'clock she had six ounces of strong beef tea, and at 10 o'clock eight ounces of milk, and was not sick at all. She slept from 10.30 to 4 o'clock a.m., when she had five ounces of strong beef tea, and then slept again until 8 o'clock.

January 17.—Temperature 97.2°; pulse 88; respirations 22; temperature of room 64°. At 8.30 she had a large cupful of tea with two ounces of cream, and some toast and butter, and shortly afterwards two teaspoonfuls of Bynin (Allen and Hanburys'), which seems to answer much better than other preparations of maltine in these cases. At 10.30 she had eight ounces of strong beef tea, and then was rubbed by the masseuse for half-an-hour. The temperature at 11.30 had risen to 98.2°, and she said she had not felt so warm for many months. At 12.30 she had a little minced chicken, mashed potatoes, and half a pint of warm milk, with a pill containing pepsin and nux vomica. She had no retching at all from this time onwards. At 2.30 she had a tumblerful of warm milk; at 4.30 a large cup of tea with an ounce of cream, and four pieces of bread and butter, and said she "felt almost hungry." Her temperature had fallen again to 97.4°. At 6.30 she had a little white soup, a fish rissole, a little minced chicken, a little tapioca pudding, a glass of warm milk, and the pepsin and nux vomica pill. At 8.30 she had a tablespoonful of Bynin and some gruel, and at 10.30 a teaspoonful of liquorice powder, and ten ounces of warm milk.

January 18.—Temperature 97.6°; pulse 88; respirations 20; temperature of room 64°. She slept very well right through the night, and at

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