

If you looked closely you could see small round papules under the skin, but found them more by feeling than by sight, for after a few hours there was another sore with an inflamed area round it. On the fourth day the condition of the patient was such that the buttocks, thighs on the inner side, the back to the waist, with the vulva, perinæum, and arms were a mass of inflammation and sores. No sleep was possible and morphia had no effect at all.

Liquid food was well taken, but there was no desire for solids. The bowels were kept well open.

The temperature at no time was higher than 99 deg., but the exhaustion, owing to want of sleep and pain, was great.

On the fifth day a skin specialist was sent for, and said the condition was owing to absolute nervous exhaustion aggravated by morphia, though this was only given four times.

Small doses of bromide and chloral were substituted, which were continued for three or four weeks, were given three or four hourly till sleep was induced. Dressings were applied every quarter of an hour, dripping with a solution of lead and starch. Lint was kept soaking in a tray of this lotion, with the result that the starch formed a deposit on it, and being wrung out very little, made a sort of skin over the inflamed surface. Great relief was given by syringing the lotion, iced, over the vulva and perinæum.

The nursing of this case was difficult owing to the irritability of the patient's body spreading to her mind, and to the large surface of the body dressed with evaporating lotion and consequent chilling resulting. The dressings were *hot* through two or three minutes after application, but hot bottles had to be given night and day, and the arms and legs wrapped in flannel to keep any feeling of warmth in the patient.

Gradually sleep became more normal, and the whole condition seemed to hinge on this. For months before the operation there had been very little sleep, and that chiefly got by means of veronal, and after the operation no sleep for nearly a week. As the nights got better the irritation gradually became less, and the various inflamed parts cleared up. There were still violent attacks of irritation round the vulva, but in a fortnight it was possible to move the patient to the seaside. Here she made good progress for three weeks. A constant change of application at this stage seemed to answer best. Resinol was used, and also homocea, both giving good results for a time.

The patient took walks and seemed regaining health, when one day she complained of pain in the left side, both back and front. It became acute towards evening and the urine passed was visibly red.

We were now evidently in for a case of acute nephritis, and in two days there was a considerable amount of cystitis as well.

The usual treatment was adopted, and after a

fortnight the patient was convalescent. The doctor considered this attack was the direct result of the skin disease. Such a large surface of the body was affected that too much work was thrown on the kidneys. I was told it was by no means an uncommon sequel, and that complete recovery from pruritus was very slow.

This was proved by the fact, that though slight, the patient still had attacks up to a year from the time of the irritation first being felt. She still has to exercise care though practically cured.

R. E.

Physical Deterioration.

In the August number of *The Commonwealth* there is an interesting article by Canon Scott Holland on "Physical Deterioration." He describes how our conscience, as a nation, has been partially weakened to human misery, how it is dreadfully fussed at being roused out of its blissful slumber and is very nervous and sensitive. It responds first to one appeal, and then equally readily to another which is in contradiction to the first, and then to a third, and so on. The result is that nothing is done, we are just as we were before we were made to feel anything. He describes the effect upon us at first of the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Our alarm was great. The story of the Manchester Recruits was the universal topic of conversation; their half-starved frames, narrow chests, and lack of good muscle. Our race had degenerated, we had no material for a decent army, we had destroyed, through our crowded city life, the physical strength that had won for England her Empire.

Then came the Report of the Commission, and suddenly round we all swung. Not all townspeople are wanting in force and muscle. Far from it. Some are as good as any produced by the country. The more prosperous among them are gaining in physical condition. The upper classes, we all know, are, every generation, taller and bigger. We see every day as brawny policemen in London as we do blacksmiths in the country. We need not weep over them. We are delighted; we throw off our depression and are as absolutely elated by our present optimism as we were despairing over our half-starved recruits.

Canon Scott Holland brings forward with the greatest earnestness the point that we, as a nation and as individuals, ought to ponder on and take to heart and act upon. What is the result of our optimism? We are missing the whole value of the Report. In reality, instead of making us happy and pleased with ourselves, it is putting us to shame. It is convicting us, not encouraging us in self-complacency. What it declares is that the race is showing no sign of any natural or progressive deterioration. Wherever it gets a chance it proves its

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