Two Cases of General Paralysis. By WILLIAM MACLEOD, M.D., Inspector General of Hospitals, R.N., Superintendent of the Royal Naval Lunatic Asylum of Great Yarmouth.

(Read at the Quarterly Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association, March 19, 1878).

I.—*Notes of a Case of Paralysis of the Insane discharged from the Yarmouth Naval Asylum, in which amendment commenced during an attack of Erysipelas of the face.*

S. S., aged 31, Chief Gunner's Mate, a strong muscular man was admitted from Haslar Hospital on the 11th December, 1877. According to his wife's statement he had a sunstroke five years previous to admission. I have fully inquired into the history of the sunstroke, and have come to the conclusion that it was not sunstroke, but an epileptiform seizure, and in this opinion I am supported by the man himself. Since his recovery he has stated that he believed it to be a faint, as he only lost consciousness for a few seconds, and was able to walk home with the men whom he was drilling at the time. Some months before admission to Yarmouth he had another fit of a more severe type and of longer duration; this was on the 6th of June, 1877. With these two exceptions he at all times enjoyed excellent health. He bore an excellent character, and at no period of his life was he given to drink.

On admission his memory was very defective, and he was the subject of various delusions, most of them of an exalted nature, such as that he had great wealth, and possessed several freehold houses, and that he had stolen the money he bought them with, that his wife was dead, and that he himself was going to be shot. He had much tremor of lips, thick and hesitating speech and unsteady gait from weakness of legs. Throughout the day he was violent; destructive of clothing and furniture; constantly on the move, requiring the special care of an attendant for himself, and extremely dirty in his habits.

By night he was noisy, wakeful and destructive, and seldom had any sleep unless it was induced by the Hydrate of Chloral; his appetite, as it often is in these restless cases, was voracious. There was great waste in consequence of the constant excitement, and hæmatoma of both ears appeared at an early period.

On the 2nd December he weighed 10st. 7lbs., his normal weight being 14 stone, and on the 18th March he only weighed 9st. 11lbs. About this time he fell out of bed, and wounded the bridge of his nose slightly.

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On the 22nd March, 1878, erysipelas of face and scalp set in, no doubt caused by the patient constantly irritating the small cut on his nose. He was removed to a large airy ward, and isolated from the other patients. A sudden change for the better took place mentally as soon as the erysipelas was fully established, he became comparatively quiet and amenable to treatment, and glimpses of reason began to dawn on him; by degrees he regained his memory, delusions of grandeur gradually passed away, and at the end of April he continued to improve, although now and then subject to short terms of restlessness and wakefulness. The improvement went on during the month of May, and by the 4th of June he weighed 11st 8lbs. In August he weighed 13 stone; he had lost the thickness of speech and tremor of lips, his walk was steady and firm, and no trace of his former delusions remained. He states that he has no recollection of anything that took place during his illness, that his first blink of memory dates from his being isolated, when attacked with erysipelas, but of what took place during the first ten days of that illness his recollections are very imperfect.

It will be observed by the above that the patient appeared almost free from symptoms of mental or bodily disease in the month of August, 1878. The question may be asked, is there any trace of the previous symptoms remaining at the present time? The only trace of the former symptoms is a certain slowness of speech, and when excited in speaking about himself a slight thickness of speech is observed. In consequence of the certainty that this was a case of General Paralysis, it was resolved, if possible, to retain the patient under observation. Before doing so, the whole of the circumstances of his case were explained to the patient, also the danger of a return of the symptoms under which he laboured when he came here. He, after due consideration, said he would remain until it was considered safe for him to go. At the end of the year he further agreed to remain until warmer weather set in. He was discharged February 25th 1879.

I think the practical lesson to be deduced from this case is to try and imitate nature in the treatment of this disease, say, by counter irritation.

II.—*Traumatic Case of General Paralysis, accompanied by Symptoms of Trance, or Catalepsy.*

History.—Mr. W. T., aged 45, engineer, while serving on board H.M.S. M—, in 1871, was one day standing close to a 25-ton gun, being 19ft. in front of, and 2ft. to the right of its muzzle, when the

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gun was unexpectedly fired. Mr. T. was, for the moment, stunned, and had to lean against the ship's side, but did not lose consciousness; that same afternoon he observed that he saw objects double with his left eye, and was deaf in left ear. His wife informs me that the first time she saw him after the accident he complained of defective vision and partial deafness, and that his friends noticed that he had suddenly become irritable and exacting, and that he had lost his former energy and nerve. There is no evidence of any hereditary taint, and he has the character of having been a steady, hard working officer.

Admission.—He was admitted to the R. N. Hospital, Yarmouth,* with the following symptoms: Drooping of left upper eyelid; left pupil dilated and sluggish; thick speech, with tremor of upper lip, and defective memory. He was weak on his legs, restless, noisy and violent, and very destructive of clothing and bedding.

He had various exalted delusions; such as, that he was to have an interview with the Queen, who was his mother, and that he was to have a grant of £15,000. He also imagined that the Queen was his wife, that he could create K.C.B.'s., and that when he shook his hands gold dropped from his fingers.

Examination of the left eye by the ophthalmoscope showed descending optic neuritis; nothing abnormal could be detected in left ear, when examined by the auroscope, but this is no evidence that the nerve tissue has not been damaged.

The symptoms mentioned above continued till May, 1877, when he gradually became quieter and more rational; he also regained his memory, so far as to be able to give an accurate account of the accident on board H.M.S. M—, which was corroborated by the captain of that ship. Between the 15th June and 16th July, 1877, he fell into a state resembling trance, or catalepsy, with the following symptoms:—

About 6 a.m. of each day he would pass into a condition of perfect stillness, lying flat on his back, and not moving a muscle; this continued till 3 a.m. the following morning, when he gave signs of life by speaking to the attendant, and swallowing whatever food was placed in his mouth. At 6 a.m., when the stage of stillness was coming on, he would break out into a most profuse perspiration, which gradually diminished as the day wore on. His temperature, both for the morning and evening, rose during this period, and once or twice slight twitches were observed, but they were not continuous.

He was to all appearance quite unconscious, his pupils were

* From Haslar Hospital, 7th Dec., 1876.

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sluggish, and sensation and motion seemed suspended. When this periodic condition finally passed off he was comparatively rational, and had lost his more prominent delusion.

In the month of November following, the exalted delusions returned in full force, and the disease steadily, but too surely, progressed.

The motionless state may have been caused by terror, in consequence of what the voices said to him, for, from what he stated in the morning, on consciousness returning, he was evidently under hallucinations of hearing.

In consequence of his showing decided symptoms of insanity, and it being necessary to place him in this Establishment, a question arose as to whether there was any connection between the present symptoms and the firing of the 25-ton gun on board the M—.

My opinion was as follows:—

"I am of opinion that the exciting cause of Mr. T.'s present symptoms (General Paralysis) was the diseased action set up by the concussion, shock and fright, arising from the unexpected firing of the 25-ton gun, when he was in near position to its muzzle."

From my experience in this Asylum, I have observed that different forms of insanity, and, in particular, Paralysis of the Insane, have followed after sunstroke, falls from aloft, direct blows on the head, concussion from falls from one deck to another, the person falling on his legs (not on his head); and, in many of these cases it was not found necessary for the individual to be placed on the sick list at the time, even for a limited period, yet from that very hour a morbid change began to take place, which in some of them terminated in insanity in a few months, in others after the lapse of years.

Average monthly temperature, pulse and respiration, of Mr. W. T., Engineer, during the months of June, July, August and September, 1877:—

Date.	Temperature.		Pulse.		Respiration.	
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
1877 June	97 70	98·20	78	77	18	18
„ July	98·60	99·10	99	103	20	21
„ August	98·	98·50	90	90	19	19
„ September	97·50	97·80	84	88	18	18

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