CLINICAL NOTES AND CASES.

A Case of Melancholy, with Stupor and Catalepsy. By JAMES ADAM, M.D., Malling Place, Kent.

The following case, which has been under my own observation from the period of the invasion of its more acute symptoms, appears to me so typical, and as so well illustrating the peculiar features of this disease, that I am induced to send a short outline of its more prominent symptoms, especially as I have been able also to obtain a very accurate history of the earlier symptoms from those well capable of intelligently observing and noting them.

On the 14th July last I was asked by the friends of a young lady, aged 21 years, to receive her under care and treatment. She was reported by them to have always enjoyed good health, and to have no hereditary tendency to mental disease. When about 11 years old, however, and when at a garden party on a very hot summer day, she complained of headache and sickness, for which she was put to bed at the time; she talked "strangely," and was supposed to have had a slight sunstroke. No after-effects being apparent, nothing more was thought of this. She has always led a sedentary life, been much at home, has studied very hard, and has gone very little into society. Last Christmas it was first observed that noises seemed to excite her; she complained of violent headache, but still went on studying. At last it became evident to everyone, herself included, that she must go for a change. This she did, and returned after a month saying she was quite well, and resumed her studious habits; but after a fortnight pain returned severely in the frontal and occipital regions, and she said she must give up study, as she personally attributed her own sensations to this cause. In the month of March the period of incubation appears to have come to an end, and decided symptoms of mental disease declared themselves, for she is reported to have now taken "odd fancies" into her head, and thought that people were looking at her. She drew down the blinds when walking through the rooms, and then she fancied she was mesmerised by persons having malevolent designs upon her to spirit her away. One night she got up from bed and rang the dinner bell violently, declaring some-

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one was in the house. These symptoms being attributed to nervousness, recourse was again had to change of scene, and she went to reside with a relative. During all this time there was great mental depression. She frequently wished she were dead, and she became gradually more and more morose, sensitive, and silent. She was still, however, at this period, able to write letters quite coherently. On the 21st of May a still further stage in the progress of her disease was reached, and it was observed that there was "something peculiar" about her—described as a strange, down look, and a constant habit of examining and fidgeting with her hands; but she talked rationally, and worked in the garden a little. She again became possessed with the idea of being spirited away, and with being very wicked. On the 31st of May she first began to refuse food, because she said that the same malevolent persons had endeavoured to obtain an influence over her, and that their spells must be resisted by fasting and watching. Some days later she refused to go to bed, sat up the greater part of the night, and absolutely and resolutely refused all food. She now became intensely depressed, lay down on the floor, or knelt confessing, as she said, all the wrong things she had done, but which she had felt impelled to do. Exacerbation of these symptoms occurred at the monthly period, the appearance being very slight. All at once, at the end of a week, she suddenly began to eat, with the exclamation, "I can eat now." She remained comparatively free from depression for a time after this, although she appeared stupid, and was taciturn. On the approach of the next monthly period she began to be more uncertain in her habits, going to bed before supper and not dressing before breakfast, and now a still further stage was reached. One evening she appeared to be asleep, and it was found she could not be roused even by shaking her; but by persevering efforts she was at last induced to open her eyes, and then she said she had been in a trance. This trance-like condition returned frequently after this, but did not last more than a few minutes at a time. Gradually more acute symptoms supervened upon this. She began to talk excitedly; she started up in the middle of the night exclaiming, "Get thee hence, Satan." She became determinedly suicidal, tried to throw herself out of the window, and when prevented doing this to strangle or smother herself, or to seize a knife. By no persuasion could she now be induced to take food, and although she had been most care-

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fully and delicately brought up, began to use dreadful language. The medical man in attendance had recourse to feeding by means of the stomach pump. The acute symptoms became continuous, and uninfluenced by the cessation of menstruation or its onset. Sleeplessness was persistent. At this stage I first saw her. The blanched, sallow, anæmic skin, the facial expression, the downcast look, the hysterical quivering of the upper eyelids, at once revealed the true nature of the case. On opening the mouth an intensely fœtid odour and discharge followed, and it was found that the fauces were in a state of great tumefaction and ulceration, and that the adjacent glands were swollen, tense, and inflamed. Blistering had been tried from the nape of the neck to the 11th dorsal vertebra without perceptible effect. She was exceedingly weak; the pulse, which could hardly be felt, was extremely rapid. The gaze was fixed straight in front, and the pupils dilated to nearly the full size of the iris; there was a tendency to a cataleptic condition. She had a delusion that she was a destroying angel, and under a Divine command to perform absurd and wicked actions. She gave no reply to questions, fell on her knees, and remained in that position till raised. She did not attend to the calls of nature. The use of the stomach pump was precluded by the state of the throat, and nourishment was administered in sufficient quantity by spoon and nasal feeding.

July 13. Has been constantly watched and nursed by night and day since her admission, and gradually gains a little strength, nourishment being still given by spoon and nasal feeding. She sometimes talks in an impulsive and deluded manner, saying she is a Royal person. She throws herself at length on the floor.

July 22. Has again become more strenuous in her resistance to taking food, and the throat and fauces having now undergone great improvement, recourse is had to stomach pump feeding with the soft tube three times daily.

July 23. About 9 p.m. was found to be very cold, slightly œdematous in the lower extremities, and a somewhat alarming faintness came on. The right leg was very cold, the left perhaps more than naturally warm; the heart sounds, although very weak, were clear. Liquid food, with stimulant, failed for a time to produce any effect, but in course of time the external application of warmth, and a stimulant applied to the lips, rallied her. She became restless at first, and finally fell into a sound sleep. On inquiry of her relatives

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it was found that she had been subject to similar attacks previously.

Aug. 4. Stomach pump feeding three times a day has been steadily persevered with until last evening, when she partook of food naturally. To-day she sat at table. She does what she is asked to do, and attends to the calls of nature. She is moved without resistance. The cataleptic condition, which has been very marked, still continues so. She remains fixedly in whatever position she is placed, and the arms or legs, especially the upper extremities, retain for an indefinite period the position they are placed in. The pupils are now normal in size; she retains the same fixed, trance-like stare.

Aug. 12. Takes all her meals well, and in full quantity; is absolutely silent, cataleptic, and statuesque. Hysterical quivering of upper eyelids continues; there is now observable a general filling up of the loose tissues under the skin all over the body. A general œdematous condition. Her actions are mechanical. There appears to be no exercise of her own will; tickling the soles of the feet produces no effect whatever. The gaze is straight forward, the eyes fixed and staring; but she evidently understands what is said to her, as she does what she is asked.

Sept. 5. Cataleptic condition less marked; expression more intelligent; pupils normal. Still insensible to tickling the soles of the feet. Œdema has nearly disappeared. She has made flesh, and has the appearance of being well nourished. The functions are naturally performed. Menstruation is almost normal. She attends to the calls of nature.

Sept. 19. Has been frequently out walking, although she still has a cataleptic tendency, and when left alone she is apt to lapse into the same fixed stare. She has not yet spoken, and cannot be induced to do so. This afternoon, when out walking, she was surprised into replying "yes" to a question.

Sept. 20. Has to-day talked, played, and sang in quite a natural manner.

Nov. 7. From the date of last report, with some occasional temporary relapses, she has made fairly steady progress in her convalescence, but she is not yet free from the idea that she has been very wicked, and at times it appears as if the cataleptic and stupid condition might very readily be re-induced.

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