CASE
OF
PARALYSIS OF THE FACE,
SUCCEEDED BY
CERTAIN NERVOUS DISORDERS.

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THE following case is submitted to the attention of the Society, as exhibiting a singular and connected series of nervous diseases, which occurred in a young and hitherto healthy female. Each disorder, or class of symptoms, taken separately, is by no means of rare occurrence; but their regular sequence, each distinctly lapsing into the other, together with a community, in a considerable degree, of curative indication throughout, seem to point to some views of pathology, which are not wholly uninteresting nor un instructive.

M. M. aged seventeen, an unmarried female in the middle rank of life, of a fair complexion,

sensitive and irritable habit, but robust form, who had enjoyed uninterrupted health from her infancy, exposed herself, about the 23d of August, 1810, whilst overheated, and perspiring from exercise, to a current of cold air, which passed from an open window, chiefly over her head and neck. On the following day she experienced some uneasiness from stiffness of the muscles in the parts which had been exposed; pain and swelling gradually supervened, and were followed, in the course of a week, by torpor and paralysis of the entire left side of her face, scalp, fauces and neck.—On the 7th of September I saw her for the first time; and found her face considerably swelled, her head drawn to the right side, her articulation very imperfect, and her power of deglutition and swallowing so much impaired, that she could suffer only small portions of liquids, and by great effort, to pass down her throat. Her left eyelid remained permanently half closed, and the right angle of her mouth was considerably drawn aside. She complained of acute pain in the right side of her head, great giddiness and occasional stupor. Her bowels were reported to have been freely purged, but her tongue was foul, and her mouth beset with minute ulcers. Her pulse was fluttering and uncertain, but on continued examination did not appear to exceed 76 strokes in the minute. She was free from thirst, heat, or any other symptom of fever. A blister had been applied, and kept open for some days

behind her left ear, but without any apparent benefit. I therefore directed the right side of her head to be shaved, and the whole surface to be covered, on the following day, with a sharp blister. She suffered much pain during the application, the discharge was copious, and the relief of all the paralytic symptoms was considerable. Sensation, which was previously abolished, now revived in the muscles and integuments of the parts affected, and a visible improvement of her countenance took place. A purgative powder of calomel and scammony was administered with satisfactory effect.—On the 10th a blister was applied to the nape of the neck, and on the 12th another was placed on the head. The effect of these remedies was in all respects favourable to my wishes, until on the 13th so violent a strangury occurred, in spite of all the means used to prevent it, that I was obliged to desist from any further use of blisters. Some distressing hysterical affections followed, which were however mitigated, by purgative and tonic remedies, and by the occasional use of the warm bath.—As my patient resided fifteen miles from Dublin, I had not an opportunity of revisiting her until the 25th, when it was reported to me that she had suffered much during that interval, from headach, giddiness and frequent nervous agitations. Her paralytic affection remained as when I last saw her; which was so far amended that she could speak and swallow without difficulty, and when her features were quiescent, her counte-

nance was natural.—At the suggestion of my friend and colleague Dr. Perceval, *rhus toxicodendron* was administered, in small doses, but without any sensible effect. My patient's bowels being extremely torpid, active and varied purgatives were taken by her almost daily, and always with apparent advantage. I then prevailed upon her to make a trial of electricity, which was administered by sparks and gentle friction over the surface of her head, face and neck, and along the course of her spine. By these means, in the space of a few days, the remains of her paralytic affection had nearly disappeared; when, on a sudden, her hysterical symptoms recurred, with so much violence, attended with faintings, convulsions, &c. that the electricity was necessarily discontinued. Shortly after this, I was called to see her in the country, I found her in a state of hysteric or cataleptic torpor. Her breathing and her pulse were soft and natural: but her belly was tumid and hard, and her extremities were alternately cold and hot. Her eyes were half open, but her sensibility was almost entirely extinguished. In this condition she remained several hours, interrupted occasionally by strong agitations and convulsive movements of the extremities and of the spine. Her eructations were copious, and her greatest distress appeared to arise from the generation and confinement of wind in her stomach. Æther, spirit of ammonia, warm fomentations, and sinapisms afforded no relief. Ginger-tea, with pills made, at the instant,

of Cayenne pepper and crumb of bread, abated the flatulence, as often as we could succeed in administering them. These fits of cataleptic torpor recurred, almost daily, for two or three weeks; sometimes occupying only a few minutes, at others, seven, or even eight hours. Topical bleeding from the head was generally followed by temporary relief; but active and unremitted purgatives seemed to afford the most decisive benefit. The quantity of matter discharged from the bowels, was by no means considerable, nor particularly unnatural in its appearance. By degrees, the patient became convalescent, and took the benefit of air and exercise most diligently; and before the end of October, she appeared to be in all respects perfectly recovered. Through the whole preceding, and indeed subsequent period of her illness, the catamenia appeared irregularly, but rather more frequently than natural. The discharge was neither deficient nor profuse in quantity.

On the 22d of December I was again called to see this young woman. Without any apparent cause, her appetite had gradually failed; and her stomach now rejected all food or medicine, a few minutes after they were swallowed. Her flesh and strength, which had been very little impaired during her preceding illness, were now more robust than when I last saw her; and her florid complexion indicated no malady. Her pulse, however, was somewhat smaller and more hurried than

it used to be, yet, rarely beat more than 90 strokes in a minute. She complained much of pain in her left side, of heart-burn and acid vomitings. The seat of pain was immediately below the left mamma; and a careful examination by pressure and change of posture, convinced me, that it probably arose from the distension of flatulence, which occupied both the stomach and the whole course of the intestines. She had no cough or diurnal fever. Opium, assafoetida, camphor, myrrh, alkalis and saline effervescing draughts, were administered in various doses and combinations. Their effects were salutary, but fleeting. A small blister, and ointment of emetic tartar were successively applied to the scrobiculus cordis, but without any apparent advantage. Many days elapsed during which all food, even of the lightest kind, and in the smallest portions, was rejected a few minutes after it was swallowed. By degrees, however, the interval was prolonged; and the first material to which the stomach was reconciled was a mixture of milk and limewater in equal portions. During the space of three weeks, she was nourished chiefly by alimentary injections, which were exhibited at night, and the feculence removed by purgative injections in the morning. Under the protection of opiates, calomel and rhubarb were freely administered, with very sparing, but always beneficial effects. In this state she continued, with very slow progress of amendment, consuming, at the utmost, six or seven table-spoonfuls of milk and limewa-

ter daily, until the middle of January 1811, when I once more visited her. She had never become thinner during her illness ; but she now seemed to have gained flesh ; and the colour, not only of her face, but of her whole skin was more erubescens ; so that excepting some expression of anxiety in her countenance, her appearance in general indicated health. She still complained of the pain in her left side, of giddiness and other uneasy sensations of her head, and of disturbed rest at night. Eight ounces of blood were taken from her arm, and a few leeches applied to the pained part of her side with advantage. The purgatives were continued, and her stomach gradually recovered its original power and functions.—On the 1st of February she was again bled on the same indication as before. Some light bitters, with vegetable aperients and occasional antacids, were now the only remedies prescribed. The symptoms were removed and did not again recur ; and on the 1st of March she was in perfect health ; having resumed all her former habits of diet, exercise and occupation.

From the period here specified, to the present date (October 1812), my patient has continued free from all material ailment.

It is deserving of remark that throughout the whole course of the disorders just narrated, the most prominent feature of practical indication, was

the great and obstinate torpor of the patient's bowels. Purgative medicines always afforded decisive relief; and bad consequences always followed the neglect or inefficacy of them. Yet the evacuations were by no means so foul, or unnatural in their appearance, as I have commonly witnessed in intestinal derangements. Neither did the free use of calomel produce any ptýalism, or excessive discharge of bile, at any period of the disorder.

Whether the hysterical symptoms, in the case here related, which were of extraordinary severity, are to be traced to the operation of the blisters prescribed for the paralytic affection; and whether the protracted incapacity of retaining any substance in the stomach, is to be esteemed only a modification of hysteria: thus reducing the three successive disorders to the same class of *nervous* derangements, I presume only to conjecture. The narrative of facts is authentic; and, I venture not to trespass on the valuable leisure of the Society, by obtruding any hypothesis which may have presented itself to my own imagination.