

ON THE BORDERLAND OF INSANITY.

DR. N. GHATAK, B. A., CALCUTTA.

Sriman Panchanan Bose, son of Srijut Khitish Chandra Bose, a third year student of our College, an inhabitant of Santoshpore, P. O. Mugkalyan, (Howrah), was placed under my treatment on the 19th January, 1929, (My Chronic Patient No 20 of 1929) recorded in Vol. 1 of that year. The following records will throw light on the case.

The child was a fair looking & well developed boy of 7 years. Some months back he was ill of Malarial Fever. It rose high, & took a Remittent type; he was placed under Allopathic treatment & was somehow or other cured with the help of several Quinine Injections given on his arms. The Injection spots got inflamed and gave the child considerable pains, so much so, that at last operation had to be resorted to, and after a long time the child got cured of the results of treatment.

Then, after a few days when the child was playing with his mates, he suddenly got alarmed, & exclaimed in a tone of extreme terror—"Oh, the Doctor is coming again," though it was not a fact. He meant the Doctor who previously treated him during his last illness & performed the operation. From that time forth, the child's expression was changed,—it was an extremely anxious & terrified look, every moment apprehending the Doctor's coming in, & every now & then he tried to go away from there as if to escape from the Doctor's unpleasant visit. This anxiety, fear & attempt to flee away grew rather intense by and by, & the child could not be persuaded to take his meals & even to sleep. However he was forcibly fed by his mother, but would not lie & keep in bed, & after a few hours of anxious & gibberish prattles, he sank into sleep out of sheer exhaustion,—so much so on the first day.

On & from the following day, the mental aberration took another shape. Lots of delusions & illusions he would see & feel, as if he was living in a world of his own, without any attention to the surroundings or to his companions. It was found that certain errors of perceptions were slowly creeping in. He felt, as he expressed, that he

lost one of his eyes. He complained rather persistently as to why it was that one of his eyes was getting smaller and smaller, why it was that his fingers were flying off, and so forth. Visions of the Doctor and of his coming in, were always looming before his eyes. Often he would feel that the Doctor was all on a sudden approaching towards him with a loaded pistol with the obvious intention of shooting him down dead on the spot. Sometimes he would weep aloud which nobody could allay.

Now, just about this time, one of his uncles died. This uncle had very dearly loved him; and so the chance is, that the calamity might have affected his mind which got already out of balance. But it may also be said (the father of the patient was also of this opinion) that his mind was too run down to feel the brunt of the bereavement.

Be that as it may, the family got alarmed, and on the supposition that the Injection Treatment had a "heating effect" on his system, they thought it wise to place him under a Kaviraj, but his treatment produced no effect. The father said that there was one effect that was found from the Kaviraji treatment that the Patient turned from a turbulent maniac into a stubborn and peaceful hypochondriac. I think, it was not the effect of treatment; rather the case progressed on and on and reached that point, because it is generally found to be a stage of dementia.

However, under such circumstances, the Kaviraji treatment was discontinued, and after a few days the father made a mention of the case to me one evening after my class lecture for the day was over, and requested me to take charge of his son. I declared the case to have been certainly curable, considering the tender age of the patient and also that it must have been a "Drug Disease,"—and then I asked him to take his son to my office, so that I might make a full record of the case. He readily followed my direction.

On 19. 1. 29., I first saw the patient, and found a full maniac, to all appearance. Profuse saliva was running down from his mouth, and he was intensely absent-minded during my examination. Even at this stage his look was full of fear, anxiety and apprehension, and he kept on looking forward towards the street, as well as into the room of my office,—as if every moment he apprehended some unwelcome visitor. Sometimes vacant look, and then all on a sudden,—

startling up fearfully as if he saw a terribly unpleasant vision. All other symptoms were negative, and so of no practical value, except that he looked fearfully "deep red" in the face.

It was rather a bad case to start with, as all such cases are. From the very look, and specially from the fact that the very thing which terrified him was still floating before his vision, I gave him Opium—1M, 3 graduated doses. The boy at once improved, as the father reported to me after a fortnight, according to my directions given along with the medicine.

Then after a pause of one month and a half, the case fearfully aggravated with a return of all the previous symptoms,—this showed that my prescription was correct, and I repeated the same remedy in 2M potency. The child took up the last thread of improvement again, but I observed that it did not help long, a fact which clearly showed that though the prescription was correct still a deeper and antipsoric remedy was wanted. At this stage I made a re-study of the case got a few more symptoms regarding his nature, and found the probable mistake of my not having given the Constitutional medicine at once at the very commencement, which was and is *Calcarea carb.* I now gave it in 10M, which finished the case, and I had not to give any other dose or any other medicine. The boy has since then been a good and cheerful "chap", full of boyish funs and jokes.

My students ask me as to why did I prescribe and select so high a potency as those. My only answer is that, in the present case it was the mental sphere that was deranged, and only the high and higher potencies can "touch" that sphere. Of course the 200th or 500th would act, but I am sure,—"not so happily."

The students should study—*Bell.*, *Opium*, *Calcarea carb.*, *Lycopodium*—as an allied group of remedies in the sphere,—especially,—"the object of fear repeatedly floating before the mind's eye,"—points to the said group.