

It happened in the person of a man about 46 years of age, who, though filling a situation of trust, which exposed him to the temptation of drink, had for eighteen years borne the highest character for honesty and the strictest sobriety. For some weeks previously he had been complaining of loss of appetite, morning sickness, and other dyspeptic symptoms, but he was able to follow his usual avocations, till an attack of lumbago confined him to his bed. His medical attendant was then called in, who prescribed such remedies as soon relieved him; he became, however, from no apparent cause, very desponding about himself, could not sleep by day, and was restless and delirious at night. As, at the expiration of three or four days he did not improve, at the suggestion of his medical man, (who suspected the case to be one of incipient delirium tremens,) I was requested to see him late in the evening, when I found him in the following state:—Pulse 84, of good strength; skin soft but not perspiring; the conjunctivæ were much injected, but there was no pain in the head, or intolerance of light; urine was abundant, and very light coloured; tongue whitish and clammy; bowels were open. It should be here perhaps mentioned, that he was subject to periodical attacks of the gout, and that he had lately been much worried by family troubles. He had no appetite, his countenance was anxious, his spirits were dejected, and he said he was certain he should die; there was nothing hurried about his manner; he answered, collectedly, questions put to him; there was no tremor about any of the muscles, or that peculiar effluvia which occasionally emanates from the body of those labouring under delirium tremens. His great desire was that something might be given him, enabling him to sleep; he was ordered a drachm of laudanum immediately, which was to be repeated in four hours, provided he did not sleep; cold applications were ordered to the head.

The next morning we found him decidedly better; he had slept for five hours, after taking the first dose of the opiate, and awoke, as he said, *feeling quite well*. He passed the day very comfortably, slept at intervals, lost his desponding feelings, and was cheerful and natural in his manner; it was thought advisable to give him the opiate again, and at night a similar result followed.

At our next visit the following day we thought him so much better, after the many hours of refreshing sleep which he had had, that we determined to omit the opiates altogether, as he expressed himself to be perfectly well. We were, however, contrary to our expectation, summoned to him early the next morning, when we were disappointed to find that he had not closed his eyes during the previous night. He had not been delirious, but he said he was afraid to shut his eyes, as when he did so he saw black objects before him. We ordered him a moderate opiate, to be taken every four hours, and a small dose of castor oil to relieve the bowels; a drachm of Liq. Opii. sed. to be taken at bed-time, and repeated every four hours during the night if sleep did not follow.

The report which we received the next morning was very satisfactory. Our patient had slept for five successive hours after the second dose of the opiate. His manner was calm and collected, and his sleep had greatly refreshed him. He continued very comfortable through this day, sleeping quietly at times until 5 p.m., when he suddenly awoke, and imagined he saw a black person seated at the bottom of the bed, which so greatly terrified him that he dared not venture after this to shut his eyes. The contrast in his countenance between our morning's and evening's visits of this day was very remarkable. It had lost all the calmness which sleep had given it, and it was now scared and staring.

The night draught was ordered him as before. At our morning's visit, however, we found that it had been productive of little good. He had been very delirious and incoherent all the night. He had slept altogether about an hour and a half. There was still that frightened look about him. His manner was very hurried and busy. He complained of a sinking feeling, and was anxious to have some food. Pulse 80, of tolerable strength; urine free; no pain in the head. It was thought advisable to abstain from opiates during the day, holding them in reserve for the night. He was allowed a mutton chop for his dinner and a glass of pale ale. A drachm and a half of the Comp. Tinct. of Gentian was given him every three hours during the day. In the evening he told us he felt better. He had slept for about an hour during the day, had enjoyed his chop, and had been more tranquil. He requested to be allowed some supper, and we therefore ordered him a beef sandwich and a glass of ale; after which he

was to take Tinct. Opii, 3j. ex Mist. Camp. repet. 4tis horis, si non adesset somnus.

The report which awaited us the following morning was much worse. He had been delirious the whole night, fancying that persons were pulling at his extremities, which were constantly twitching. He answered questions rationally. Could not be persuaded but that persons had been ill-treating him during the night. He had not slept a minute. We now agreed, as opiates had failed, (for he had never refused to take his medicine as ordered) that we would try the sedative effect of a warm bath, in which he should remain twenty minutes. Previous to his leaving it, cold water was to be poured on his head. Our orders were immediately obeyed, and after the bath he was much quieter, lost the twitching of the muscles, and felt inclined to sleep; pulse 72. We gave him a little ether and sal-volatile, as he complained of a sensation of sinking, which frightened him. We also allowed him to have a little brandy and water should he wish it during the night, and beef-tea ad libitum. We agreed to omit the opiate as he felt he should sleep.

We paid him an early visit the next day, and were again to be disappointed. He had not slept. His manner was very excitable, and he imagined that persons were in the house waiting to murder him. He had talked very incoherently, but knew those around him. During all this time there was no tremor or profuse perspirations. We immediately gave him a drachm of Liq. Opii sed.; continued the ether and sal vol.; ordered him a mutton chop, as his appetite remained good, and beef-tea. We visited him again at the expiration of five hours, and he then appeared better. He slept for an hour, had enjoyed his chop, and he told us he thought he should now do well. He had been kept perfectly quiet, and his room had been darkened. His pulse was 84, bowels regular, and urine abundant. We then gave him two drachms of tincture of Hyoscinus, purposing to see him again at 9 p.m., when we again found him wild in his manner, his countenance flushed, and his eyes staring. We therefore determined to omit everything else, and give him a drachm of laudanum every three hours till he slept, with beef-tea if he asked for it. After taking two drachms he slept for about two hours. He talked much during the night about his work, and he fancied he was engaged in his usual avocations.

We thought him more collected when we paid him our morning visit, and he told us there was now nothing the matter with him. We made no alteration in our treatment, excepting that we increased the opiate to sixty minims at night, to be repeated as before.

On the following day we were pleased to find that our patient had slept for four or five hours. His manner and countenance were more natural, and he was able to tell us the proper day of the week, which he had been unable to do the four previous days. We allowed him a beef-steak for dinner, drachm-doses of hyoscinus in camphor mixture every five hours, and enjoined perfect quiet.

At our evening visit we were again to be disappointed. It appeared that he had remained very quiet and rational up to 6 p.m., when suddenly he became excited and delirious. He did not know where he was. He imagined that persons were in his room, whom he saw dancing around his bed, and he heard voices below constantly calling him.—R. Tincturæ Hyoscyami, 3j. statim et repetantur 3tis horis. Deinde sinist adit somnus capiat Tincturæ Opii drachmam. Beef-tea during the night.

Again at our morning's call we were received with the intelligence that our patient had not closed his eyes since our last visit. He had been incessantly getting in and out of bed, and fancied he was hard at work. He did not know that he was in his own house. He told us that he was perfectly well, and was very indignant that he was not allowed to go out. There was no apparent loss of strength or symptoms of failing vitality. Urine was plentiful; pulse 84. He had dressed himself twice during the night. His appetite was still good. He had taken his medicine as ordered. We ordered him small doses of morphia every four hours, and determined to see him again at 2 p.m., when we found him up and dressed. We were told that it had been found impossible to keep him in bed. He was talking incoherently, and looked very haggard. We agreed to give him another warm bath, and try whether this would calm his excited condition. It was immediately prepared for him, and at our evening visit we thought him decidedly better. He had not attempted to get up since the bath, and though still very delirious, his manner was less