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A CURIOUS CASE OF MALARIAL NEURALGIA.

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On the 16th of March, 1884, I was sent for to attend Mrs. J. N—, æt. 33, who was suffering from a severe attack of neuralgia. The patient's appearance presented all the characteristics of the malarial cachexia; she was much emaciated, and her complexion was considerably jaundiced. The history of the case is a peculiar one. For three years previous to 1881 she had resided in different malarious districts in Michigan, but enjoyed complete immunity from malarial symptoms until April in the year mentioned, when she was prostrated by an attack of intermittent fever, which continued, with more or less severity, for three months, the paroxysms being quotidian. In the fall of the same year occurred the first of a series of periodic attacks of neuralgia which have since been maintained with unvarying regularity as to time of occurrence and succession of symptoms. Previously to her illness the woman had always enjoyed perfect health, was strong, vigorous, and active. Family history good.

The characteristics of the periodical neuralgic attacks—as described by the patient and her husband—are as follows: Each attack consists of a "period" of nine days, and occurs twice in the year—in the spring, about the time the snow is disappearing; and in the early winter just before the first appearance of the snow. The paroxysms are quotidian and retarding, that on the first day setting in about 8 a.m., and each successive one about an hour later than on the preceding day. They also gradually decrease in length of duration, usually terminating, no matter at what hour they begin, at about 9 or 10 p.m. The individual

paroxysms which resemble those of intermittent as to succession of events. Each is preceded by marked coldness of the extremities, especially the feet; the other symptoms of the prodromic stage are wanting. Anorexia is persistent throughout the entire period; no vomiting. Violent throbbing, referred to the back of the right orbital cavity follows, and ushers in the cold stage. The latter only differs from the same stage of intermittent in the co-existence of neuralgia. The throbbing behind the right orbit is intensified by excruciating lancinating pain in the same situation, and, in a less degree, along the course of the right supra-orbital nerve. There is also a sense of tension and pressure behind the globus, and which the patient describes as being such as might be occasioned by the presence of an abscess. The whole region about the affected eye is tender; much photophobia exists, with redness of the conjunctiva, and a copious flow of watery fluid from the eye, which the patient declares excoriates the skin of the cheek. Movements of the orbit are attended by a grating sensation. The other eye is unaffected. During this stage the patient maintains an erect sitting posture and complains of a sensation of great distension in the head. Pain in the frontal sinuses precedes, accompanies, and succeeds the cold stage; there is no præcordial oppression. The pain during each paroxysm is remittent, each access being limited to three or four minutes and rapidly followed by another, the entire stage lasting from half an hour to an hour. The hot stage now supervenes, with a cessation of the neuralgic pain and the throbbing, only a feeling of soreness and tenderness remaining. In an hour or two the pyrexia abates, and the sweating stage sets in. The patient, utterly exhausted, falls asleep, and usually sleeps until morning.

The above succession of symptoms is repeated daily—but commencing each day at a later hour—until the ninth day, when a curious phenomenon is described as invariably occurring. The upper eyelid on the affected side becomes ecchymosed, and during or after the sweating stage the patient experiences "a cracking sensation, as if something had given way," at the chief seat of pain, accompanied by immediate and sudden relief from the feeling of tension and pressure. In her own words, "an abscess seems to burst;" and she insists that a discharge of pus into the pharynx takes place.