

Before making any remarks upon this case, I will examine with you the gastric symptoms and the intestinal organs generally. The tongue is slightly coated and flabby; it is broad and indented by the teeth. There is some tenderness in the middle dorsal region of the spine; there is also soreness on pressure in the epigastrium, but there is no prominence, thickening or tumour to be found; nothing hard can be felt in the abdominal cavity, but there is a generally diffused soreness about the stomach, not localized, however, in any particular spot. The bowels, generally, are constipated.

I will examine the lungs, and see if this cough has any meaning; but find that it has not; the respiratory sounds are healthy. The urine has been examined, and does not contain any abnormal ingredients; to read you the actual note, it is as follows: Urine, specific gravity 1.025, acid, contains neither albumen nor sugar, and is of normal colour. There has been no fever, and her temperature this morning is 98½.

I have now given you the history and the present condition of this case, and you will ask me what is the cause of this persistent vomiting, and what remedies have been employed that could have stopped it in this short space of time—in not more than three days since the treatment began?

In the first place, what is the matter with the woman. When I saw the patient in the ward and heard this history of uncontrollable vomiting, my first thought was that this is a case of irritable stomach, similar to others I have seen occurring in young women, and associated with gastric ulcer. The appearance of the tongue, her age, the sore spots in the back, along the spine, the vomiting after taking food, were all in favour of this view, but I very shortly dismissed the idea. I knew that gastric ulcers do not have general soreness, but rather localized tenderness in the epigastric region; here it was general. I also knew that if this were a case of gastric ulcer, since it had existed for a year, it should give us all the symptoms of such a lesion; we should have hæmorrhage, and above all, we should have pain, increased by eating. The most prominent

symptom, pain, was absent; the next most prominent symptom, vomiting of blood, was also absent. I therefore rejected this for another idea. In the last year I have seen three cases, two in private practice, and one in this hospital, in which there was excessive vomiting; the patients were reduced to the verge of death—vomiting, vomiting, vomiting; nothing stayed upon the stomach; in these I found that the difficulty was not an ulcer of the stomach, but was due to reflex irritation from some other organ which itself was the seat of disease. The cause of the trouble, I discovered, was some form of flexion of the uterus, with congestion, and perhaps more or less ulceration. This was the cause of irritation, and the vomiting in these patients at first resembled, in its pathology, the vomiting of pregnancy, but in the course of time became complicated with some gastric catarrh, from the long continued functional disorder.

In the light of this experience I began to suspect that such was the case here. An examination was made, the result being that a retroflexion of the uterus was discovered. Now, of course, the case begins to clear up. It is one of reflex vomiting, with some gastric catarrh, going on for an entire year, in spite of the greatest care in regard to diet and general treatment.

When she was admitted into the hospital she was simply put upon a diet of milk and lime water, until her condition should be observed. The vomiting continued; although it lessened under the strict diet, it did not disappear. Now, you wish to know how we have checked this vomiting, how accomplished this result? I gave her the treatment that had been previously successful in my experience—the application of ice bags to the spine, between the shoulders, leaving them on for some time, until the skin is thoroughly cold and she begins to feel chilly. She has had absolutely no internal treatment; the diet has been the same; but she has improved almost from the first day of the application. Now, gentlemen, you will not always be as successful in the use of this remedy alone; but as I know from experience its value, I was determined to give it a trial. Is there nothing we can combine with this