TENT LIFE FOR THE DEMENTED AND UNCLEANLY.

By ARTHUR B. WRIGHT, M. D.

Manhattan State Hospital, East, Ward's Island.

The experiment of treating the tuberculous insane in tents having proved to be a success, it was decided by Dr. A. E. Macdonald, Superintendent of Manhattan State Hospital, East, to open another camp for filthy and demented patients. Accordingly on July 15, 1901, twenty individuals of that class were selected, 60 per cent of whom were bedridden.

Most of these patients were very stupid and demented, taking only the slightest interest in their welfare and lacking an appreciation of affairs about them. Their weight was taken on admission and about every subsequent three weeks. Eight of the patients weighed less than 100 lbs., the lowest weighing only 88 lbs. At the second weighing, three weeks later, it was noticed that every patient in the camp showed an increase in weight except one and he weighed exactly the same. This patient aged 40 had been an inmate of the hospital for 19 years and was in a condition of terminal dementia, secondary to melancholia. For the last two years he had been very dirty and filthy in his habits, soiling his bed and clothes, and exhibiting no interest whatever in his surroundings. At the next weighing he had gained one pound and was considerably improved in his habits. At the closing of the camp it was noticed that he had gained seven pounds during the three months. He was brighter and more appreciative. While he was still considerably demented, a decided improvement, both physically and mentally, was noted. He had begun to appreciate the necessity of attending to the calls of nature, and at the end of three months, was not what could be called a filthy patient.

Of two paretics, one showed a gain of six pounds and the other a gain of five pounds during the three months. Both

at first were practically bedridden, but at the end of three months were among the most active.

Another remarkable improvement was in a man, 24 years old who had been a patient in the hospital for four years. He was extremely demented for one so young, would sit for hours in one position and could hardly be aroused. He was placed in bed for three days and was then permitted to get up and walk around the camp. He was filthy in his habits and allowed the saliva to drool over his clothes, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he could be kept clean. At the end of three months he showed a gain of twenty pounds, was brighter, talked to members of his family, when they visited him, which had been an utter impossibility at the opening of the camp. The habit of drooling was also stopped. While still demented, he showed an undoubted improvement both physically and mentally, and the benefit of tent life was, in his case, marked.

Another remarkable improvement was in a man 22 years of age. He had been a patient only seven months and on admission was extremely depressed and demented. At the time of admission to the camp, he was dull, and very filthy in his habits. An almost immediate improvement was noted. He began to brighten, became more appreciative and steadily gained in weight. On admission he was greatly emaciated and weighed only 93 pounds. Three weeks later he weighed 101½, a gain of 8½ pounds. During the next three weeks a further improvement was noticed. He weighed 120 pounds, a gain of 18½ pounds over the last register, and of 27 pounds since admission to the camp. At the time of breaking up the camp, this young man had made the remarkable increase in weight of 50 pounds. With the gain physically, a mental improvement, almost as remarkable, was noticed. He was bright and appreciative and was one of the most valuable assistants about the camp, helping the more feeble about and attending to the distribution of the food. He became absolutely clean in his habits and in every respect a well-conducted and orderly person. Suffice it to say that this patient has since been discharged, and undoubtedly is now a useful member of society.

The improvement in those who were formerly filthy, the majority having relapsed into a chronic state, was marked. Treat-

ment in the form of intestinal antisepsis had long before been instituted, but with only temporary effect. In all of the twenty cases there was not a single instance in which there was not improvement. At the end of three months there were only three patients who might be called filthy, and these had shown a marked improvement since admission. The majority had become accustomed to attending to the calls of nature and would voluntarily use the commode chair.

During the warmest weather it was with some difficulty that the more stupid could be gotten out of bed. However, at least half of the patients were gotten up every day and in the best weather 75 per cent were allowed to exercise about the camp. The situation of the camp being in a most pleasant spot on the east bank of the Island, which the sound steamers and excursion boats were continually passing, the patients watched the excursions and listened to the music with interest.

All were eager at meal-times, showing an increased appetite. In some cases it was with difficulty that over-eating was prevented. Many read papers and magazines, a few played games, and all showed a greatly increased interest in their surroundings. During the warm and pleasant weather, the flaps were rolled up so that a free circulation of air was established, and the few who remained in bed were practically out-of-doors.

In regard to the gain in weight I will briefly summarize the figures taken collectively. At the end of the first three weeks every patient in the camp showed an increase in weight except one, and he weighed exactly the same. This patient was the first one alluded to individually in this paper. The highest gain in weight was $8\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. At the next weighing better results were shown. The highest gain was $18\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. over the last record. At the next weighing a still further gain was noticed. Every patient showed an increase over the last register, one gaining 23 lbs., in the three weeks. This last patient showed the remarkable gain of 50 lbs., having weighed only 93 lbs., on admission and scaling 143 lbs., at the close of the camp season. The average gain per patient during the three months was $13\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.; the lowest increase was six pounds, the highest fifty pounds.

In conclusion I will say that the experiment of tent life for this class of the insane was entirely a success. Several of the

patients have been closely observed since the breaking up of the camp, and it is noticed that the inclination of those who were formerly filthy is to relapse into their former habits.

It is the intention to open another camp this summer, for the same class of patients, and also a camp for convalescent patients from which I have no doubt the results will be all that are expected.

Perhaps in the future there may be more of interest to write on this subject, and it is the hope of the writer that this brief synopsis of the results of out-door life upon these poor creatures may influence others to try the same treatment for those under their care.

TENTS FOR FEMALE PATIENTS. TO ILLUSTRATE PAPERS OF DRS. WRIGHT AND HAVILAND.

TENTS AT WARD'S ISLAND. TO ILLUSTRATE PAPERS OF DRS. WRIGHT AND HAVILAND.