

# CASE OF TEMPORARY INSANITY FOLLOWING THE INGESTION OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF WHISKY AND CAFFEIN.

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Mr. J. S. L., aged 52, came under my care, Aug. 19, 1907, with a diagnosis of insanity, which then existed.

*Physical Examination.*—A tall, well-nourished man, station good, pupils equal and of normal reflex; patellar reflexes slightly exaggerated; tremor of the tongue and hands; tongue heavily furred; temperature normal; heart and lungs normal; urine acid, sp. gr. 1.025; no sugar and no albumin.

*Personal History.*—Is married, father of three children; has had all the diseases of childhood; no venereal history. An immoderate user of alcohol at indifferent times; has been in institutions twice for so-called insanity. It is well to say here that he committed himself once to get away from liquor, but went to his business every day from the asylum, and was committed once for alcoholism by two physicians.

*Mental Examination.*—The patient is delusional; believes his wife is murdered; can not be reasoned out of this; thinks he is a great man, and that he is the only one who has the ability to talk with God by shuffling his feet, through which members he receives the messages; believes he is master of mental telepathy; thinks he can talk to any one at any distance by this method. His delusions, which apparently arise from the illusions and hallucinations of sight and hearing which seem rapid and continuous, are chiefly of a religious nature. He is suspicious and distrustful; his chain of communication through unseen agencies, and his anger at being doubted lend color to monomania. He is very voluble of speech, which is clear and distinct.

As his mental condition cleared up so quickly on his two previous commitments, in fact within a few days, the question at once arises whether this man was ever insane in the true meaning of the word, or if he simply had a confusional condition arising from over-stimulation. A careful examination of the following account of himself will do much to clear up some difficult points in his case, which is unusual from the apparent gravity of his mental condition, also from the fact of the short duration of his symptoms, and that he knew all the time he was not himself, and that he was under the control of something which he could not understand. He gave a clear history of consuming  $2\frac{1}{2}$  quarts of Scotch whisky in four days. He was not drunk at any time, but realized that he must stop, which he did at once, and began taking caffein as a bracer, so that in a short time he had taken the best part of two bottles and soon began to get happy. I now give the exact story of himself as he remembers it:

Previous to this time I had not used liquor for two years, but I had reached a state where I could not go any further. I had a severe neuralgia and began by drinking whisky moderately, and drank harder and harder, so that in four days I had taken about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  quarts of Scotch whisky, and stopped short; but I felt the reaction, and began taking caffein as a bracer and soon commenced to feel good. So I took a trolley ride to Willow Grove, and I commenced to hear peculiar noises in the bumping of the wheels, which soon began to say things. This interested me, and I wondered what it meant. I asked the motorman if he also heard these noises and, of course, he said he did not. I stayed for the concert at Willow Grove, and had this same experience coming back, only the noises were more marked and the forward motor began talking to the backward one, telling each other to "hold up." The motors held a long conversation. They talked about their work and they would say, "Let up," "let her go," etc. I now believed there was something more in electricity than most

people knew. I thought it contained peculiar spirits. After I got off the car, I heard them still talking as far as my ear could reach. I then went home and took more caffein and thought I would take another ride, as I enjoyed this one so much. It was raining, and I had the same experience in this car also. Coming home I bought more caffein. This night I had vague ideas that I could talk to others at a distance. I was then approaching such a condition that I could hear words in running water, and while the words were there, I could not talk for any length of time as I lost the trend of conversation, and then I tried the gas and got the same result there. Now I began to get messages through the air; from the locomotive whistle, for instance, and more so from its puffing. I slept well that night, and the next day went to Willow Grove again and found that each individual motor had a different tale to tell, and this was the first day that I was able to hold a distinct conversation with them. My whole idea then was to test out the motors. Some of the motors would be profane, some vulgar, and some very religious, and I talked with these motors that day and I got good results and their advice was very good. Even when the motors would talk in a crude manner, their suggestions were good.

Early in the evening I got into communication with people at a distance. This was brought about from the fact of my trying to get into communication with my wife, who was away, and as I did not know where she was, I could not reach her, but I got into communication with a woman in New York whom I did not know, but who knew my wife and she told me my wife was not in my circle. She told me she was at the Engleside, at Beach Haven, and she told me a great deal more. I was receiving these messages through my feet, and she told me I could call up anyone. So I then got into communication with a strange woman in Boston, who told me I could talk with my sister in Brooklyn, and I talked with her for about two hours when she shut me off. I heard no distinct voices in that conversation, but my power being so great, I thought I would try other things now. Then I felt that I could talk to the departed. I tried it and found that I soon got in communication with my father who died a year ago. This was extremely exhilarating and delightful. He told me he was very happy, and made many suggestions, and asked me to collect all his old books and papers and give them to a certain library.

I was in a state of ecstasy; never felt so well in all my life. I felt as if I had become very powerful from a psychic standpoint. I now talked with my mother, and thought she had returned to earth again. She told me that Heaven was divided and subdivided, and soon space became annihilated. She told me where I could find her, and at last, becoming very tired, I felt that as this power might leave me, I would write out the general results of the evening. I did not feel excited, but took a bath and went to bed.

I slept from 3:30 a. m. until 9 a. m., and took more caffein on awakening, and I thought I would try my powers again as soon as I awoke, which I did. I shuffled my feet and asked if anyone wanted me, and found I was in communication with the woman in New York, who put me in communication with my wife, who told me she would be home at 8 o'clock that night, that she would see me, and that I should go to Willow Grove again that afternoon. I now took more caffein. I got my breakfast on Cheltenham avenue, and took the number of the cars I rode in, and made note of the different motors and found I could talk with each individual motor, and the motors talked back and forth to me and about me and told me all about my previous life. All day long at Willow Grove I questioned whether this thing could be or not. I then began to get emotional and would shed tears very easily. I had no fears whatever. I went out into the old picnic grounds and shuffled my feet and asked for advice and it came from God, saying to me, "Go home at once." There was no distinct sound in these voices, but after drinking lots of black coffee, I started for home and as soon as I got into the car the motor began to talk to me again. So I made up my mind that I would take my wife to hear this curious thing on the following day.

I got home about 7:30 p. m., and cooked supper for my wife. I took more caffeine and called her up, but she told me she was in a railroad accident at Jenkintown. I waited and still she did not come, and asked again on calling her up if anybody would like to speak to me, and the voice said "Yes," and it was God himself who spoke to me this time and told me my wife was dead. I then became troubled and depressed, and looked out of my south window. I beheld the most beautiful sight I ever saw in my life. The whole southern skies were full of bright angels singing to me. I now began to feel depressed again, and thought all had gone to pieces, and shuffling my feet I called up God at once, and asked him what I should do, and he told me to take Dr. C. to the police station and get my wife's body. I called Dr. C. over the telephone. He came to see me but would not go with me, and God kept telling me "stick at him, stick at him," and the next thing I knew I was in the station house, and believing I was in the hands of God, I gave up very quietly, but still I carried on my mental telepathy, whenever there was any sound to do so with, and the messages came to me as if by wireless telegraphy. I told the police to do what they pleased with me as I was in the hands of God and he would take care of me.

I remember having a hearing and also that the judge would not let me talk. A doctor examined me, and I said little to him and he little to me. I still felt all right, and still believed in what I had seen and heard, and continued to do so for several days, when I began to question things. They did not now appear to me as facts, as I found I could corner some of these voices, but I still had one mighty guiding spirit of another sphere, and this one led me to believe I was to be the controlling spirit of this sphere, but not yet, as I was not yet purified, and it would happen only when that sphere and this earth were in conjunction. I now began to question still more as to whether these things were facts, or whether I had been fooled. My mind began to clear up quickly, and I soon came to the conclusion that my condition had been the result of the caffeine and the whisky.

This man's mental condition began to clear up a few days after being admitted to the almshouse, and in about ten days or less he was in a condition to laugh at his delusions, illusions and hallucinations, all of which he still remembers well, as can be seen from the above account of himself, which he gave me six weeks after his discharge.

We now come to the question as to the probable diagnosis of this case, and before arriving at any conclusion it is well to remember that although this man used alcohol immoderately at intervals, he did not have mania à potu at this time, for the following reasons: His hallucinations and illusions were mostly of an exceedingly pleasant character. He would eat well, whereas patients with mania à potu do not; and he did not have terminal mania. Now, let us consider a person with delirium tremens. He apparently did not have this condition either because his hallucinations were pleasant; he did not see snakes and other horrible things; he was not depressed, but, on the contrary, extremely happy; his skin was not cold and clammy; his temperature was normal; pulse 80 and of good volume; his muscles were not weak; he had none of the characteristic fears, and he was not noisy.

Let us look at the physiologic action of caffeine in large doses on the brain. According to Bartholow, who has a fuller account of its action than I can find elsewhere, it causes, at first, drowsiness, but this is very quickly followed by wakefulness, excitement, muscular tremor, mental confusion, hallucinations and delirium. There cerebral effects soon terminate in deep stupor, but this is probably the result of exhaustion. We now have a peculiar mental state, which would seem to be a condition of mental confusion arising in an apparently nor-

mal man from overstimulation, first by alcohol and followed by caffeine. There seems to be little doubt that most, if not all of this man's peculiar symptoms arose from caffeine poisoning. Dr. I. P. Willits, who saw this case in consultation with me a number of times, also believed his condition to be the result of the action of caffeine in overwhelming doses on an already overstimulated brain.

The treatment consisted of isolation, active purgation with magnesium sulphate, a liberal, non-stimulating diet; rather large doses of sodium bromid, with hypnotics, at bed-time, seemed to work well. Liberal quantities of water were given and, finally, suggestion was tried, which in this case seemed to help the patient. As to the amount of caffeine consumed: On the first day he took a six ounce bottle of a certain preparation which contained more than one grain of the hydrobromate of guarana to the dram. The second day he took a six ounce bottle of another preparation, each dram of which represented one grain of caffeine citrate and 1/100 of strychnin sulphate, so that more than 100 grains of caffeine were taken in two days. As the hydrobromate is more active than the citrate, it is little wonder that this man had such vivid mental pictures.

#### PHAGOCYtic WORK PERFORMED BY THE KIDNEY CELL OF THE FROG.\*

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While *Rana pipiens* was being utilized for class study in our laboratory abnormal conditions were observed in the left corpus adiposum. The normal corpus consists of an irregular mass from which arise several finger-like processes which may branch. The color is yellow and the blood vessels show prominently on the surface. The whole structure is attached to the anterior end of the kidney by a membrane. In origin it is probably derived from the same kind of cells as those that constitute the kidney; and in the adult its blood vessels pass through the kidney, there being none that pass directly from the corpora to the dorsal aorta.

The abnormal corpus was reddish in color and roughly rectangular in shape. There were but two processes arising from the central mass. The central mass was 15 mm. long, 9 mm. greatest width.

A microscopic study of this corpus revealed the presence of numerous blood corpuscles in various shapes. The blood corpuscles were so numerous that the finer structure of the corpus could only be made out with difficulty. Evidently a hemorrhage had occurred of sufficient size to distend the corpus out of all ordinary shape. A further examination of the frog, with a view to determining the cause of this hemorrhage, showed a small collection of blood on the dorsal side of the coelome just beneath where the ilium joins the last vertebra. The ilium had been broken and probably the breaking caused the hemorrhage.

The fat cells in the corpus were of various shapes and much scattered. There were numerous nuclei in the connective tissue which were dividing amitotically with no increase in size after. This process is similar to karyorrhexis in human degenerating tissue.

\* Contribution from the Zoological Laboratory of Syracuse University. The full report of this case will appear with eight drawings in the *Anatomischer Anzeiger*.