

Lypemania with Stupor;  
Tendency to Dementia.—  
Treatment by the Extract (Resinous Principle)  
of *Cannabis indica*.—  
Cure. Bicêtre Hospice

M. Moreau (de Tours)  
(Moreau de Tours 1857)

Following the doctrine that we have heard professed numerous times by Monsieur Doctor Moreau, it is with madness as with most of the great neuroses: the type of medicine that best suits in the prodromal period or initial phase of this illness loses all or almost all its efficacy once the chronic state is declared.

At the time this medication (internal or external derivatives, baths, affusions, etc.) must be abandoned, and resumed only in the cases, happily fairly frequent, where the affliction recovers momentarily a certain acuity.

In the confirmed chronic state, the physician must have recourse, above all, if not exclusively, to the employ of medicaments capable of profoundly modifying the vitality of the organ first injured, that is to say, the brain. The opiates (useful particularly in chronic alcoholism), the extract of Indian hemp, etc., achieve this objective perfectly. The observation which follows here is an example; we have thought that this title will acutely interest our readers.

The so mentioned Louis Suzung, 18 years of age, a typesetting worker, enters the hospital for the insane (secondary section) the 5th of January 1857.

The admission document is thus composed:

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Translated from French by Ethan Russo, MD.

Ill for only one month; febrile condition, tremors; state of stupor; melancholy; refuses almost absolutely to respond. (He had had typhoid fever?)

Nevertheless, one sees, this last piece of information from the certificate is provided with some doubt; in effect, if we ask his mother, she tells us from the start that her son had had typhoid fever; but pressed to respond to the symptoms that he had presented in the course of this illness, it is no longer possible to recognize a foundation there, and furthermore, although one would admit the possibility, one could not invoke it as a point of departure for the mental affliction. For here is what his mother reported to us: "Before having taken to his sickbed, my son was getting lost in the streets; he could not find his way, he had lost his habitual reasoning. This state lasted eight days until he was obligated to take to his bed, and he remained down for three weeks, complaining of a pain in the pit of his stomach, of an intense headache, fever, etc.; but without abdominal pains properly speaking, without diarrhea, without ringing in the ears, without epistaxis."—He himself, when he had recovered his wits, and interrogated on this point, confirms completely that which his mother recounted, and in addition, he added to us that it was at the time of a quarrel in the attic that he became obliged to take to bed, a quarrel which serve as a point of departure of a futile motive, and due evidently to his mental state.

The father and mother of Suzung are still living, the father, being young, is graying; once married, he stood by this habit, and would drink only a few drops with a friend from time to time, but speaking of his mother, he would renew at times to the point of gaiety. He had during those times sciatic pains, and had suffered an attack of apoplexy.

The mother had suffered a typhoid fever in her youth; in 1833, an enteritis. From the age of fourteen she had been prone to neuralgic pains in the head, which in the last year had taken on an unaccustomed intensity. What is more, she had a paralyzed arm. She had from her marriage four children: two boys and two girls. One of the girls died at the age of three, during convulsions; the other was well, and presented nothing remarkable; she much resembles her father. As to the boys, who are simply the portrait of the mother, the elder became insane at the age of eighteen, at the same age accordingly as he who occupies us at this instance, and, according to the file, we see that the form of the

insanity is the same: state of stupidity, refusal to respond, lypemania, a few moments of agitation, etc. He remained in the hospital from the 11th of August to the 23rd of November, 1849. At times, he presents again with a few delirious ideas, his mother says; he becomes intoxicated, and since his departure from the hospital, he has had a sciatica.

As to Suzung, who is the subject of this observation, the day of his entry, we found him seated on his bed. His physiognomy expresses down-heartedness, anxiety; he regards everyone with fear; he complains continually; he utters a few words that he interrupts with groans, and in which there is question of *God, of offenses to Divinity, of deserved chastisements, of earthworms*, etc. He does not respond to questions to which one addresses him; he repeats a few words that he hears spoken.

The second day, a flesh wound was placed on the nape of his neck. "In good time," he says during the operation, "my God, punish me, I am well to blame." The wound modified nothing in his state. He is agitated, and also has a few moments of violence during which he seeks to strike out, and one is obliged to restrain him on the couch. There, he takes on extraordinary poses, tries to strike himself against the posts of the chair that he occupies, or the iron of the bed nearby, and if he succeeds: "There's another one killed!" he says with each blow he gives himself. Then he resumes his moaning, his incoherent words, and recites his imaginary supplications. He refuses nourishment, and it is not until after a long debate that one may make him take a bit of broth. At last, one morning, being unbound, and having evaded the surveillance of the boy, one finds him mounted on a window, and it is probable that his intention was bad.

After twenty days, the wound having produced no result, one omitted it, and the ill one was submitted to hashish, which was given to him in pills, at the dosage of 5 centigrams to start. One half-hour after the pill was taken, he was given a cup of black coffee. The administration of this medicament was continued for fifteen days, at a progressively increasing dose, and one succeeded at giving him up to 30 centigrams.

This method of treatment seemed at first to produce no change in the state of the patient. His complaints, his remarks, the form of his hallucinations did not change; he was only more dejected, he would close his eyes in a spasmodic manner; the psychic manifestations of the hashish became mingled with those of the illness, and the state of Suzung seemed considerably aggravated.

One was forced to maintain him perpetually restrained on his couch. He did not wish to accept food but from one sole service boy, who managed to make him swallow a few spoons of broth; from every other hand, he obstinately refused the food that one presented to him. He thinned down a great deal, wide eschars formed on his sacrum, on the trochanters, his elbows; but they had the aspect of sores of good nature; the general state was very grave, and inspired serious fears. He remained continually tormented by his visions, but the words by which he expressed his supplications changed: "The screw, hello! the screw, the kneading-trough, the cuts of five hundred blades, etc." Whatever the remarks he whispered, he then resumes his continual groaning. The patient was submitted to tonics.

This state perpetuated itself all the way to the month of April, the epoch in which his wounds commenced to scar. He accepted aliments more voluntarily, whoever was the person who offered them. His thinness was extreme, but in sum, his general state was less severe.

After a fortnight, the eschars were completely closed; his frailness was less marked, and because still continually prey to the same ideas, one was obliged to maintain him with the strait-jacket, but one could, on nice days, take him in the courtyard. Little by little, one saw this serious general state ameliorate; his thinness was a little less. At the same time as this physical improvement was produced, almost imperceptibly so to speak, one observed some improvements in the mental state. Thus, one was no longer obliged to retain the strait-jacket; he ate a bit on his own; but that represented all the stated progress.

More often he remained in the courtyard propped against a tree, and taking extremely grotesque poses; he made a hunchback, arranged his arms in a bizarre fashion, resting half bent on his legs, one would say that he was going to collapse on himself; he urinated in his pants, he neglected to wipe his nose, even when the nasal mucus passed his nasal orifices. In a word, he was a veritable infant of a few months for whom it was necessary to care, to dress, to clean, etc. The groans were the same, and if one spoke to him, or better, if he repeated a few of the words that he heard, or else he whispered: The screw, the trough, etc. His ideas had not changed. At diverse occasions, Monsieur Doctor Moreau compared him to these *santons* (idiots from the abuse of hashish) that the Arabs parade in Egypt. After this medicine, the primitive illness found itself almost completely effaced by the symp-

toms germane to the action of hashish. From there, it was believed possible to harbor a favorable prognosis.

This state lasted through the final days of April and almost the entire month of May. At times, one could remark that his general health was better. The thinness had disappeared, and in this physical respect, Suzung was very well. His face, so thin a few months before, was full, and likewise, this rapid passage from the state of inanition which inspired such fears.

But here in the first days of June I remarked at the evening visit that while I approached Suzung with caution, and without him seeing me, he was no longer complaining; and that as soon as I presented myself to him, the moaning commenced. Finally, one evening, the 5th of June, I was able to obtain a direct response to the question to which I addressed him. Asked about his imaginary fears, he responded to me that with respect to Monsieur Moreau he was afraid.

The following day, I was able to follow a conversation that I did not seek to prolong, and the morning of the 7th, a bit of the fear he experienced returned, it was to Monsieur Moreau that he responded. It was an immense step.

The 8th, his responses were perfectly exact to questions addressed. Asked about his past life, he gave a very good account of his profession, the attics where he had worked, of that which he had experienced during his entry to the hospital, his bed number where he resided in the infirmary, etc., etc. The memory returned for all, except for that which transpired during the time that he had been sick confined to bed in his mother's house. Nevertheless, in the midst of this return to reason, he retained a few lypemaniacal ideas, and repeated in some moments the word guillotine. As there was a concert that day, one asked if he would like to attend; he went, but complained after a few moments that the music gave him a headache, and he asked permission to retire.

The 9th, we found him in the morning occupied with reading an article that a patient had lent him, and at the evening visit, he complained of cephalalgia, perfectly explainable by the assiduousness which he had given to his reading (from 8 o'clock in the morning to 5 o'clock in the evening).—Foot bath with mustard.

The 10th, his head was yet a bit heavy, but his reason had returned completely. For him, that which had passed in these last months was nothing but a long dream of which he was very exactly aware. The guillotine, of which he had talked again a few days before, was a

ridiculous idea, he said it himself; the memory of his illness at his mother's home had returned to him. He was completely cured.

From this day, Suzung presented no remarkable phenomena, if this is not a perfect conservation of his mental faculties, and the 18th of June he was able to be returned to his family.

*Homo, Provisional Intern*

## REFERENCE

Moreau de Tours, Jacques-Joseph. 1857. Lypemanie avec stupeur; tendance a la demence.—Traitement par l'extract (principe resineux) de cannabis indica.—Guerison. *Gazette des Hopitaux Civils et Militaires* 30:391.

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