

The Unknown Case of Benjamin Gidliffe.

Benjamin Gidliffe was a boy admitted to the Great Ormond Street Hospital on the 19th of July in 1866 and discharged on August 29th. Benjamin was age six; his condition was assumed to have started after falling down three and a half months before being admitted. The initial sign of his condition was a gradual loss of weight and constant head pain. Three weeks before being admitted, Benjamin began to frequently vomit as often as twenty times a day and became very weak in his back and legs; four weeks later Benjamin was unable to walk. As the situation carried on, he could not bear to be touched and slept badly due to pain in the middle of his back. Oddly enough, two weeks after the alleged injury his mother examined him carefully. However, could not find any bruises or wounds. Doctor Ringer kept a diary of the process of his recovery, from the 20th of July to 27th of August.

On 20th July, Benjamin was said to have a "pained expression on face", however, no facial paralysis. He lay on his back but could move his head well from side to side and arms. His tongue had light white fur and dilated pupils. Doctor Ringer noticed that Benjamin's right pupil was smaller than his left and would find the slightest touch painful. On a brighter note, he was capable of using his arms well and could stand without being rigid and had no swelling around his neck or in the groins. Stomach was normal however, had a habit of wetting himself, his temperature was 99.6 degrees and had a pulse rate of 140. The next day Benjamin's condition was pretty much the same, however, had an increased pulse rate of 180; his pupils were equal but still quite large.

The next note on Benjamin was made on the 26th and he was said to have made a lot recovery since being admitted. At this point he could sit up and turn over on his own and was in no pain, no weight gain had occurred but the pulse rate had decreased to 124 and no headaches were noted. Tongue was clean and he no longer wet himself. On August 27th, Benjamin had made an impressive recovery; for starters, he gained weight for the first time in his period at the hospital. His pupils had decreased to a normal size, he could walk properly again and his pulse rate was the lowest since his arrival at Great Ormond, 120.

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