

*Tetany*.—During the last few weeks there has been an epidemic of this strange disease in this city. Up to the present I have not heard of any fatal results. It is mostly young people that are affected. The following case may be taken as an average sample of the present epidemic :—

A boy, aged 18, who, on his admission into hospital, complained of cramps in his fingers. The cramps came on suddenly two days before, and at that time he was feverish. On examination, it was found that there were tonic contractions of the fingers and thumbs of both hands. The points of the index and little fingers met in front of the other two fingers. Both hands were in a state of partial flexion. It required considerable force to overcome this contraction. The facial muscles were contracted in such a way as to produce what is known as the *risus sardonius*. The muscles of the upper arms, lower extremities, trunk and neck were free from spasm, but their mechanical and electric irritability was much increased. This change was even more marked in the muscles affected with the cramps. Strong pressure on the brachial arteries increased the spasm.

Five days after this patient's admission, he was discharged as cured. He was warned, however, that the spasms might return, but as two days had passed in freedom from them, this was not considered probable. He was treated by the internal administration of bromide of potassium and the faradization of the contracted muscles.

As to the causes of this disease, little is known. The great majority of the cases in Vienna are seen during the months of January, February and March. The epidemic form is most common in boys about the age of puberty. It is not uncommon in women who are nursing. It is sometimes seen during the course of Bright's disease and cancer of the stomach. It has been seen accompanying the onset of one of the acute specific fevers. It is seen following the removal of enlarged thyroids, especially in girls. In severe cases, the muscles of both upper and lower extremities, together with those of the face and trunk, are the seat of spasms. The spasms are not always constant, but often intermittent. They last, as a rule, from one to twelve