

so frequently engaged, that the utmost vigilance on the part of the practitioner is required to prevent the occurrence of such mischief yet it must not be lost sight of that the disease, even in its mildest form, is attended with danger; one case is recorded of sudden death during the spasmodic closure of the glottis; this occurred in a child who was otherwise in perfect health, and I have heard of several instances of the same kind. In every stage of the disease, therefore we should be aware of and guard against the liability to sudden death; all needless sources of irritation should be avoided, and the child closely watched, and carefully held and supported during the paroxysm of dyspnoea. In irritable and psionate children the danger is increased. Dr. Johnson has stated to me, that he has seen a child in a state of asphyxia caused by this disease, recovered from apparent death by the instantaneous application of artificial respiration.*

Dr. Cheyne in his treatise on hydrocephalus,† gives a very just delineation of this affection; he describes it as consisting in a crowing inspiration with purple complexion *not followed by cough*; he mentions the rigidity of the muscles, the thumbs clenched in the hands, the peculiar livid and swollen appearance of the extremities, and the occurrence of universal convulsions; he states that seven instances to his own knowledge have ended in death; and in regard to treatment, he has dwelt with peculiar emphasis upon the importance of change of air and change of diet, as the means of greatest efficacy in effecting a permanent removal of the disease.

Dr. George Kellie of Leith has published a short paper‡ entitled, "Notes on the Swelling of the Tops of the Hands and Feet, and on a Spasmodic Affection of the Thumbs and Toes which very commonly attends it." This condition of the extremities he has described very accurately, and the reader will do well to peruse his paper with attention; it must, however, be remarked, that this symptom belongs to a more advanced stage of the disease, and does not exist until either the general health be considerably impaired, or the spasmodic symptoms have increased in frequency and severity; it is, therefore, not essential to the disease.

Mr. Porter in his valuable observations on the surgical pathology of the larynx and trachea, alludes to this disease, and particularly mentions the fact that it occasionally happens that the child, during the convulsions, dies before assistance can be procured.

In the *London Medical and Physical Journal*, vol. xlv., p. 9, this disease is spoken of under the name of cerebral croup, a denomination which is objectionable, because it is more than doubtful whether in this affection, at its commencement, the brain be at all involved; because in its symptoms and progress it is altogether distinct from croup. He describes with accuracy the symptoms in three of his own children; of these, one died, the others recovered. In speaking of the treatment of one of those cases he concludes with the following words:—"The spasms frequently recurring, his nurse was changed, and he was sent to the country; and he is now a fine healthy little fellow." He justly dwells upon the importance of attending to the state of the head during the entire progress of the disease, and also upon the necessity of dividing the gums whenever the process of dentition may appear to be a source of irritation.

In the fifth volume of Richter's "*Specielle Therapie*," there is a tolerably accurate, account of this spasmodic affection.

The facts which have been recorded, and the references which have been made, prove that this disease is of more frequent occurrence than has generally been supposed.

A controversy has been maintained for a long time as to the existence or non exist-

* The local application of the ointment of the Binioidide of Mercury to the nape of the neck, as advised by Dr. Arnoldi, now of Toronto, and which furnished the basis of a communication to this Journal by Dr. David (see Vol. 1, page 101) has been attended with the happiest effects in the hands of those gentlemen to which we may add our own experience. Pustulation should be effected by it, from time to time. We have no doubt that its beneficial action is due to its influence in the *Spinal Accessory* at its origin which may be communicated to the other branches of the 8th pair. (Ed. B. A. J.)

† Second Edition, page 16.

‡ Medical and Surgical Journal, October, 1816.