

SPASMODIC TORTICOLLIS.

CONDITIONS which are met less than half a dozen times, in a moderately busy general practice, during a quarter of a century may justly be considered rare.

In that time I have come across two cases of Spasmodic Torticollis, short accounts of which may be of interest.

Mr. H. H. O., of Barrie, Ont., age 32 years, tinsmith for seventeen years, healthy until this illness, was the first.

In December, 1880, he worked very hard, putting a furnace in a school-house seven miles in the country, driving back and forth, the weather being very cold.

In January, 1881, he had what was called lumbago, which, in spite of a variety of treatments, became more and more painful. Pain was increased by movements.

In March the first symptoms of torticollis commenced with slight twitching.

In a few weeks this had increased in severity, until violent spasms of the right sterno-cleido-mastoid were almost constant.

In July he came to me with a letter from the late Dr. Wm. A. Hammond, a well-known neurologist of New York, who had the patient under observation for ten days. The rarity of these cases is exemplified by Dr. Hammond's statement, that he had seen only twelve cases, including this one.

At this time the spasmodic rotation of the head was so violent that the patient could walk only with difficulty, and by a strong side pull upon his nose with his hand. The nose was much deflected by this. Besides the sterno-cleido-mastoid of the right side, the trachelo-mastoid, inferior oblique, and other muscles having a rotary action on the left side were affected.

He spent most of the time lying on his back, in which position there was little spasm except on making some voluntary muscular effort.

Previous to consulting Dr. Hammond he had passed through the hands of several good doctors. Counter irritants, anti-rheumatics alteratives, electricity, massage, suggestion, all had been used, but with no marked effect. Occasionally here was slight temporary improvement.