REPORT OF A CASE OF FAMILIAL TREMOR OF THE HEAD.¹

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The patient is twenty-two years of age, a student in one of the great Universities. He has had no illnesses beyond those of childhood. As a result of overwork in the laboratory last Winter, he became very nervous, readily excited and irritable, and in January of the present year first noticed the trouble of which he now complains, which has persisted steadily ever since.

He is a slight but well-built and muscular man, taking a good deal of exercise and without any evidences of impaired general health. It was not until after the general nervousness had lasted for some months that he observed that he had a slight lateral tremor of the head. The tremor is a very small one, moderately rapid and almost absolutely constant. It does not appear to be rendered worse by observation, it is not overcome by muscular effort although sometimes during muscular effort it ceases; it cannot be voluntarily stopped, and the effort to stop it does not alter its character. There are no evidences of involvement of the cranial nerves in any way. There are no points of tenderness in the cervical region. The head can be moved with entire freedom in every direction without any pain or spasm. He presents no sign of exophthalmic goiter. His reflexes are universally perfect, his general health is good, and the only thing that could be discovered calling for treatment was a myopic astigmatism very imperfectly corrected.

The point which leads me to report briefly this curious if not very important case is that the difficulty is a familial one. His mother had the same trouble, beginning at twenty-two years of age, and it has continued ever since. It has at times in her case been made worse by illnesses and then gone back to its previous standard on recovery from the acute illness. The patient's maternal grandfather developed a lateral tremor of the head at forty years

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of age and a maternal great-grandfather exhibited it at seventy, but no detail of the trouble in their cases can be had, though they are said to have had no other signs of paralysis agitans. It is possible, of course, that in these instances the two older patients may have been suffering with paralysis agitans, but it is unusual to see it begin in the head before it appears in other parts.