ART. X.—*Case in which unusual Phenomena followed the Administration of "Sulphate of Morphia."* By L. B. ANDERSON, M.D., of Elton, Hanover city, Va.

Miss V., a young and highly accomplished lady, from excessive fatigue, and loss of sleep in attending a sick friend, became so "nervous," to use her expression, that she was unable to procure the slightest repose. She laboured under slight cerebral disturbance, and a very irritable stomach, at the time I was called to see her; both of which, however, were measurably relieved by the operation of a mild cathartic. But she was unable, notwithstanding, to obtain refreshing sleep.

A fourth of a grain of the sulphate of morphia was now directed to be administered, and a like quantity to be taken every two hours, unless it increased the pain in the head, (which was the only unpleasant sensation she had ever experienced from its use,) until she became entirely composed, or fell into a sound and refreshing sleep. She experienced no unpleasant sensation from its use until shortly after the administration of the third portion, when she complained of a "tingling" or "pricking" sensation in the extremities. Her hands and feet became cold; her fingers were involuntarily contracted and extended; she experienced some uneasiness about the elbows and knees, and also, at times, a slight difficulty in breathing. The time for the administration of the fourth portion having arrived, she had it given, hoping that it might allay or mitigate those unpleasant sensations. A short time, however, only elapsed after its administration, before all the phenomena above mentioned became greatly aggravated. The muscles of the hands and feet became rigidly contracted; the legs were drawn upon the thighs, and they upon the abdomen: the arms were alternately flexed, extended, and then contracted across the thorax: the muscles of the tongue, fauces, and glottis, became so much affected, that articulation and deglutition were almost impossible, and respiration was greatly obstructed. In fact the spasmodic action of all the voluntary muscles was so great, as to simulate a *genuine case* of traumatic tetanus.

Alcohol, ammonia, coffee, cold and hot ablutions, and constant frictions, were resorted to with no effect. The spasmodic action commenced at 2 P. M. and continued until 5½ P. M.; at which time I had anticipated the effect of the morphia would begin to subside; but I was disappointed. Hoffman's anodyne (which I had not been able to obtain at an earlier hour), was now administered, ℥iij in quantity; a portion of which being ejected, a like quantity was again administered. In a short time the spasms began to abate, and in the course of half-an-hour, had nearly entirely subsided. I cannot say that the anodyne was the cause of the cessation of the spasms, or whether it was occasioned by the agent which produced them, being more generally diffused, or being carried off in the secretions. But only a few moments elapsed after it was taken, before the lady expressed herself greatly relieved.

There was no peculiarity in the constitution of Miss V., nor had she ever before experienced any inconvenience from the use of any preparation of opium. It is true, she had in early life been subject to occasional attacks of epilepsy; an attack of which, however, she had not had for a considerable time prior to the use of morphia. She has taken, since the above mentioned circumstance, several of the liquid preparations of opium, from which no unpleasant effect was experienced.