

THE CANADA LANCET

Vol. XXXV.

AUGUST, 1902.

No. 12

A CASE OF TETANUS.*

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Physician, Toronto Western Hospital, Reported by G. H. Carveth, B. A., M. D., Surgeon, and Lelia A. Davis, M. D., Pathologist, to Toronto Western Hospital.

I. W. a girl of fourteen, unusually large and well developed, and previously strong and healthy, while playing in a garden stepped on the tooth of a rake with such force that it passed through the sole of her boot into her foot, making a wound of some depth. No physician was consulted and the foot was bathed and poulticed until the wound was healed.

On May 31st, three weeks after the accident, having in the interval shown no symptoms of constitutional disturbance, she began to complain of stiffness, at first in the jaws and afterwards extending over the whole body. The next day she had a convulsion. Dr. Wyllie was called in on June 2nd and found the usual symptoms of tetanus: rigidity of the muscles of the jaws, neck, limbs, and abdomen,—the head partially retracted, angles of the jaws drawn downward, inability to change her position or to swallow, except fluids in very small quantities, frequent and very painful tonic spasms, hyperæsthesia of the whole body, especially marked at the point of the wound, sleeplessness and constipation. Temperature 102 pulse 120.

The following afternoon June 3rd, she was removed to the Toronto Western Hospital. Before the next morning, she had two very severe paroxysms, after consultation with members of the staff, it was decided to place her in an open tent on the Hospital grounds, where she remained while under treatment, (see photo). 10 c. c. of anti-tetanic serum were injected June 4th, and this was repeated on the two following days. An ice-bag was applied to the spine and continued until the temperature was normal. The usual anti spasmodic treatment was ordered. Cannabis Indica, discontinued in a short time, because of its causing soreness of the tongue, chloral hydrate, in 30 gr. doses, every four hours until the spasms became less frequent and severe, then night and morning for a few days. The patient however frequently refused both medicine and nourishment, and, after the first week, no medicine of any kind was given.

Nourishment consisted of milk, given, at first in very small quantities, through a glass tube. She was able to take solid food first on the 20th day of her illness, she was given all the cold water she could be induced to take.

The bowels were left quiescent for a week and then moved by enemas.

* Read before the Staff, Toronto Western Hospital.