

# THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD.

VOL. XIII.

MONTREAL, DECEMBER, 1884.

No. 3

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## Original Communications.

### NOTES ON TWO CASES OF LEAD POISONING.

By L. D. MIGNAULT, M.D.

Read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal, December 12, 1884.

The above title will sufficiently explain that this paper is merely a brief record of two forms of this common affection which have come under my notice. The chief points of interest being to my mind in the extreme nature of the symptoms, and at the same time their ready yielding to therapeutic measures. The occurrence of lead poisoning and lead colic is by no means rare, but perhaps the sequences are not often met with in so marked a form as in the cases which I am about to relate.

Marie E. D., æt. 16, entered Hotel Dieu, May 1st, 1882. First saw her May 3rd.

She is a slender, emaciated girl, and complains of great debility, with colicky pains in the abdomen, and loss of appetite. At the same time she is unable to use either of her hands, even to dress herself, and they hang powerless at right angles whenever the arm is raised.

Upon examination there is a characteristic blue line along the gums, and tongue is heavily coated.

The extensor surface of the forearms, especially the right, is extremely wasted, in fact there is perfect flattening of the surface and no appearance of the usual fullness at the elbow, the atrophy resembling that of advanced cases of progressive muscular atrophy.

The flexor surfaces are also some wasted, as are also the muscles at the ball of the thumb.

On being told to seize any object with the fingers there is immediate flexion of the hand, and the fingers are thus prevented from closing upon the palm. As above stated, when the arm is raised, the wrist drop is most complete and characteristic, and the extensors are perfectly powerless to produce the slightest effect upon the hand.

Patient states that this present condition of affairs has lasted since Feb. 1st, when all symptoms were as perfectly characterized as at present.

Since then, and before that date, she has been under medical treatment, having been given iron and stimulating liniments to the arms, but all to no avail. These statements were borne out by inquiries among her relatives.

We had clearly here to deal with a case of *lead poisoning* of the most typical character, and I set myself to treat it accordingly.

I therefore prescribed laxatives, with 5 grains of pot iod. every four hours.

I at the same time applied galvanic electricity to the arms (app. goiffe), primary current.

At first and for one week the electric current seemed to have little or no effect, and no response was observed,—in fact the muscles were as insensible to the electricity as if the arm was lifeless. There was indeed degenerative re-action. Treatment continued all May. I state effects as noticed.

June 1st. There is now a marked effect; after a week the primary currents gave evidence of slight effect; the blue line is beginning to disappear, and the constipation is much relieved.

July 1st. Digestion and appetite perfect, and the muscles regaining power. The hands can be used to a certain extent. The effect of the current is most marked.