

THE CANADA LANCET.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SCIENCE,
CRITICISM AND NEWS.

Vol. XXII.] TORONTO, MAY, 1890. [No. 9.

Original Communications.

A RATIONAL METHOD OF OBTAINING EXTENSION OF THE SPINAL CORD AND COLUMN.*

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The employment of traction in affections of the spine is not of recent origin, horizontal couches provided with means for stretching the spinal column having been in vogue long anterior to the use of suspension, but the comparatively recent re-introduction of the latter principle has given it a new impetus, and traction in a straight line is

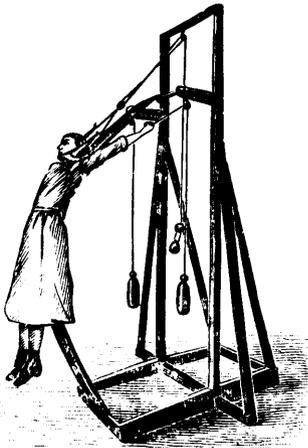


Fig. 1.—Upright Spinal Extension Frame—as originally constructed.

now not only generally advised in the treatment of deformative conditions and diseases of the column, but also for the mechanical treatment of diseased conditions of the spinal cord itself. Traction upon a curved line, however, possesses so many advantages over this, that I am constrained to advocate it strenuously.

* Read before the Chicago Medical Society, Dec. 2, 1889.

Several years ago, while reading a paper upon Lateral Rotary Curvature, before the Orthopædic section of the New York Academy of Medicine,* I called attention to the employment of the curved board in connection with suspension as a curvative measure in that deformity.

At that time I presented to the notice of the section, drawings of two frames (see figs. 1 and 2), devised by me for this purpose, and, as far as known to me, the first ever constructed upon this principle.

These frames I now take pleasure in formally presenting to the profession for their acceptance, but as they differ in some minor details from those originally devised, and as their range of application has since been so greatly enlarged, I have deemed it expedient to bring their claims prominently before you through the medium of this paper.

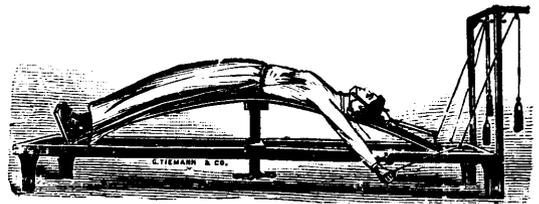


Fig. 2.—Recumbent Spinal Extension Frame—as originally constructed.

The first one to which I wish to direct your attention is standing before you. (See fig. 3.)

You will notice that it consists of a curved board, against which the patient leans, the curve being increased or diminished by means of a strong screw.

Traction is effected by means of pulleys and weights attached to a sling passing under the chin and occiput. The arms may remain free for exercises with dumb-bells, elastic cords or pulleys and weights, and slings may also pass under the axillæ as in the Sayre method.

It will readily be seen that if the posterior surface of the trunk is placed against the curved board, and traction on the spine is exerted by means of the pulleys and weights, the spine will be placed in a state of extension, the chest capacity will be increased and abdominal muscles strengthened, with a minimum of fatigue to the patient.

This frame, for the sake of convenience, I have

* *The Medical Record*, May 21, 1887.