

ART. XXX.—*Hospital Notes and Observations.* By ROBERT CRAIK, M.D., House-Physician and Surgeon, to the Montreal General Hospital.

No. 2. TETANUS.

As everything connected with such a formidable disease as tetanus is worthy of close attention, in order that some progress may be made towards a more successful plan of treatment than any hitherto adopted, I have deemed the following case worthy of attention. It is true that the course and termination of the disease were by no means more favourable than usual, but even from such cases lessons may be learned which may prove useful in the management of others who may be unfortunate enough to suffer from this fearful malady.

On the 19th November, 1855, John Russel, aged 19, a stout Irishman, a confectioner, of industrious and temperate habits, was admitted into the hospital under my much lamented friend, the late Dr. Crawford, suffering from acute traumatic tetanus.

The history of the case was as follows. He had been working at his trade until the 7th November, when in walking over some loose boards in the yard, he had the misfortune to step on a projecting rusty nail. Having only a pair of old slippers on his feet, the nail passed almost completely through his foot, and was with difficulty withdrawn. The wound being so small, and he being anxious to continue his work, little attention was paid to it, a little simple ointment being the only application which was made to it. On the following day the wound was so painful that he was obliged to remain at home, the foot being very much swollen. Dr. Scott, having occasion to visit a patient in the same house was asked to examine it, and prescribed a poultice, which was applied, and gave much relief. In a day or two, suppuration was established, and the pain and swelling disappeared. On the 16th it had closed entirely, and he returned to his work in perfect health. During the course of the following day, he felt a sense of constriction about the chest and throat which he attributed to cold caught by imprudent exposure while heated. The constriction was such as to prevent his swallowing without difficulty, and there was also some rigidity about the jaws, all of which symptoms he supposed to indicate an attack of quinsy. About five o'clock in the evening he was seized with a sort of rigor followed by stiffness of the whole body, so that he was unable to walk home without assistance.

About thirty hours after the first fit, he was seized with another of tremendous severity, which lasted about ten minutes, the whole body partaking of the universal spasms.