

of the joint is rendered impossible. Then we get the condition shown in the appended diagram (Fig. 24); the limb on the affected side being drawn up, and, therefore, permanently shortened. The result of this, of course, is that the hip bone is much distorted on the affected side. Then we usually find the further result that the spinal column becomes curved in consequence of Nature's effort to keep the body erect. This is often the best result that can be hoped for, in a case which

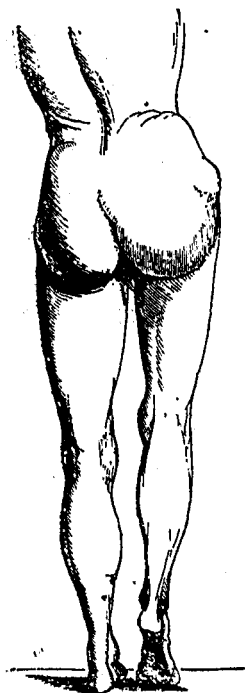


FIG. 24.—
Deformity caused by
Hip-Joint Disease.

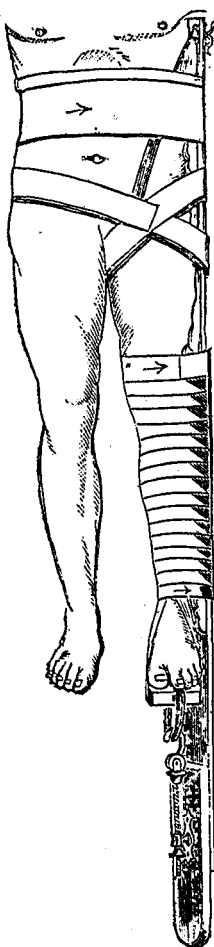


FIG. 25.—
An Extension Splint.

has been at first neglected, because it is unfortunately too common for abscesses to form and burst, and then to discharge for weeks or months until the child dies of sheer exhaustion.

So far as the nursing goes, the first essential is to give the joint absolute Rest. The doctor will endeavour to separate, and keep apart from each other, the inflamed surfaces of the joint—a common sense procedure, which, as we have already seen, is necessary whenever inflammation is present.

In these cases, therefore, if taken early enough, an Extension Splint, an old-fashioned form of which is shown in Fig. 25, may possibly be applied by the surgeon. Its effect can easily be understood, as it evidently draws down the limb, and therefore keeps the affected joint at perfect rest, and also keeps the affected sides of the joint apart from each other. Even when the disease has progressed to a considerable extent, a splint is fixed to give the joint as complete rest as possible, and thus relieve pain and assist repair. When abscesses have been opened, it will, of course, be the nurse's duty to keep the surrounding parts as perfectly clean as possible; probably to syringe out the sinuses which have been formed, with such lotions as the surgeon may direct. A practical point in this connection, which is worth remembering, is that the irrigation of a sinus is much more effectively performed when a small-sized rubber catheter is slipped over the glass point of the syringe, as the fluid can then be carried by the catheter deeply down the sinus, with much less pain and discomfort to the patient than a hard glass syringe will cause. But, as we have previously seen, whenever there is pus exuded on the surface of the skin, absolute cleanliness is necessary, in order to save the patient an intolerable amount of itching. Amongst antiseptic lotions, none are more efficacious in these cases than Carbolic Acid, in such strength as the doctor may direct; because it is not only a powerful antiseptic, but also possesses the property of numbing the nerves of the skin.

The next point of importance in the nursing is to persuade the patient to take as much nourishment as possible, because it is of the utmost importance to maintain the bodily strength; and the rigorous confinement, the loss of the natural exercise to which the child has been accustomed, and the deprivation of fresh air and constantly changed surroundings, tends to depreciate both his appetite and his spirits. It is, therefore, no unimportant part of the nursing treatment, to cheer the child and interest him in books or games which will take his thoughts away from the pain and the dull monotony of his daily life.

There are many incidental matters with which the nurse will have to deal in these cases, but which require no special mention, except, perhaps, that if the child suffers much from sweating, especially during the night, the fact must be reported at once to the doctor; because the symptom is always significant of considerable and generally increasing bodily weakness, whilst in many cases the perspiration may be so profuse as quite to exhaust the child's strength.

(To be continued.)

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