

years ago. As a practical point, it is well to remember that some patients are very intolerant of any salicylate and that they require to be carefully watched during its administration. If it makes them sick, it should be stopped until the doctor's further orders are obtained; and if it makes them faint, stimulants may be required at once.

*In Gout*, we have a very clear clinical history; the patient usually has a family history of the complaint, that is to say, his father or his grandfather, or perhaps his grandfather and his great great grandfather have suffered from the disease. Because, in some families, by a peculiar freak of nature, the disease misses every other generation. The patient may feel perfectly well himself, and may describe himself, in fact, as never having felt better, when, in the early hours one morning, he is awoken by a sudden pain in the ball of the great toe which is so severe as almost to be intolerable. In a very short time, the pains continuing and increasing, the joint becomes swollen, red, and tense. The attack, if untreated, may last several days, the joint gradually recovering and the patient being free from an attack for some months. In ordinary cases, a recurrence then takes place, and, thereafter, for the rest of life, often at diminished intervals, the patient will suffer from similar onsets of pain, the joint gradually becoming thickened and permanently swollen. For the Nursing treatment, the affected foot must be raised above the level of the rest of the body so as to lessen the blood pressure as much as possible. It should be rested upon a pillow with a cradle to keep off the clothes, because the slightest pressure upon the inflamed joint causes almost intolerable pain. The application of the cotton wool bandage or lotions that may be directed by the doctor is usually the chief part of the nursing, although these cases are notoriously difficult to attend upon in consequence of the proverbial ill-temper which accompanies the attacks. A piece of lint soaked in warm solution of bicarbonate of soda, with a teaspoonful of laudanum added to it, placed round the joint and covered with oiled silk, and this again well covered over with a layer of cotton-wool, often affords the greatest relief to the pain.

*Strumous Disease of a Joint*.—The popular name for the most common form of this disease is White Knee, because one or other knee is the joint most commonly affected. It is a very serious affection, the cartilage becoming diseased and the morbid process usually going on despite medicinal treatment. It usually occurs in children of scrofulous and enfeebled

constitution who have little power of repair or recovery from the disease. The pain is often extreme, and once more the use of a cradle to keep the bedclothes from the affected joint is a measure which adds greatly to the patient's comfort. It is well for the District Nurse to remember that if an ordinary steel cradle, such as we are accustomed to in Hospital wards cannot be obtained in her work, the bottom and top of a band-box may be knocked out, and the limb being placed through it, a fairly efficient substitute can be thus provided.

If the case is neglected, as is too frequently the case amongst the poor, the cartilage becomes destroyed, the ends of the bones become carious, abscesses form all round the joint and burrow their way through the brawny swollen tissues until they open and discharge. Fig. 23 shows a typical instance of these results in old hip-joint disease.

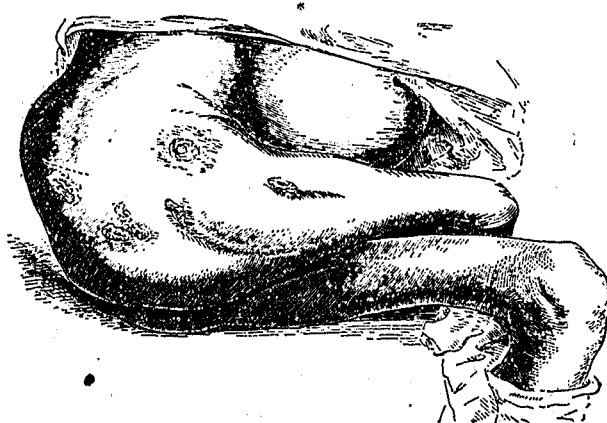


Fig. 23.—Hip-Joint Disease, showing Abscess, scars and openings.

So far as the nursing of these cases is concerned, the cardinal benefits of Rest and Cleanliness are once more rendered obvious. The first essential to the recovery of the joint, and to the cessation of pain, is to place the inflamed parts at perfect rest. Some form of splint, therefore, is almost invariably used and one which enables the limb to be *extended*, that is to say which stretches the inflamed joint as much as possible and so separates the opposite sides of the inflamed cartilages, and thus prevents them from continually rubbing up against each other and thus maintaining the inflammation and pain. If abscesses have opened and are discharging, the greatest cleanliness in washing the skin and irrigating the abscess tracts will be requisite. The patient's appetite must be tempted and his dietary must be of the most nourishing kind so as to improve his strength, and thus increase his power of repairing the injury which disease has caused.

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