

The Mechanical Treatment of Spinal Caries.

In this article we propose to give some description of the plaster work done at Lord Mayor Treloar's Cripples' Hospital at Alton, as described by Mr. Gauvain, the Medical Superintendent, in a lecture demonstration to the British Medical Association, and have pleasure in publishing a picture of a case of cervical caries put up in a plaster jacket.

Mr. Gauvain emphasises the fact that in the treatment of spinal caries the presence of muscular spasm is not considered of such great importance as he holds it to be. Its importance in producing deformity of the hip joint, and other joint affections, is well recognised, and, actually, spinal cases are usually only treated recumbently, or in a jacket, when they are treated at all. Therefore, if the spine is hyper-extended, a factor in the production of deformity is gradually overcome. This immobilisation is first obtained by means of a spinal board, or of the back-door splint, which has already been described. After that they are treated in plaster jackets. The application of these jackets needs the direction of an expert, because, as Mr. Gauvain points out, if a child has been recumbent for a very long time, and you immediately put on a plaster jacket, at any rate by suspension, you will subject the child to a great deal of discomfort and pain, and furthermore there is a great tendency to syncope. If a child has been lying down in a horizontal position, and is suddenly put in a vertical one for suspension, the circulation of

the blood will be altered in such a way that he is quite likely to faint, or at any rate to be extremely uncomfortable. To avoid the complication a stand is largely used at Alton on which a child can be tilted into any position, and an appropriate rest is put across it on which the patient can have his books, toys, or meals. He is still in the hyperextended position; he can learn his lessons and feed himself with comfort, without in any way disturbing the proper relation of the parts about the spine. Mr. Gauvain says that this board has been

found of very great value in treating the cases at Alton. For example, if after an operation, a patient suffers from shock, or collapse, he can be tilted head downwards. A further modification of the board is also made by which the patient can be put in any position, in any plane desired by the surgeon. This is found of great advantage where there are sinuses, to assist in their more efficient drainage.

Before a child is put in a plaster jacket he is always tilted, so that when he is put in a vertical position

for the plaster to be applied there is no danger of syncope.

Mr. Gauvain states that he finds that if a patient is put in a plaster jacket if the disease is above the dorso-lumbar region, unless you apply the plaster with the patient in a vertical position you will not get the proper correction of the deformity. If you put on the plaster with the patient in a horizontal position, it will do quite well for lumbar caries; but for dorsal or even dorso-lumbar, and certainly for cervical cases, it is desirable to have the



CASE OF CERVICAL CARIES IMMOBILISED IN PLASTER OF PARIS JACKET.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)