

JOINT TUBERCULOSIS

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Joint Tuberculosis by Leonard W. Ely

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LEONARD W. ELY

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BY

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THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED TO MY FATHER.

"Sesit thou a man diligent in his business? He
shall stand before kings."

30176

PREFACE.

It has been my ambition for some time to write a book on joint tuberculosis. Watson-Cheyne and Senn have both performed the task, but their books, practically the only ones in English, were written some years ago. The time seemed ripe for another work which should embody the more recent knowledge on this interesting branch of surgery.

This little book was started some two years ago, and was laid aside, because it seemed to consist of a collection of facts and opinions more or less disjointed, and without power to carry conviction; nor was there any authority to which I could go for filling in the gaps.

Joint tuberculosis has furnished the subject for a number of books and monographs in foreign languages, some of them most interesting and instructive, and for chapters in various works on surgery and on orthopædies, but most of these productions voice the results of their authors' experience exclusively, and they all manifest such a diversity of opinion, that one who would write a book on joint tuberculosis must needs follow the example of their authors and set down his own opinions, based on his individual clinical experience, or else must choose from among the conflicting opinions such as appeared most rational.

On this account I laid the work aside and betook myself to the pathological laboratory. Through the courtesy of Profs. Prudden and Wood, and later of Prof. MacCallum, of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York, the facilities of the college pathological laboratory were placed at my disposal. Dr. William C. Clarke kindly permitted me to make use of his excellent collection of joints and aided me in my earlier work. The material at our disposal, while fairly good, was not sufficient, and but for the kindness and interest shown by a number of New York surgeons, I should have been more or less hampered. I take this opportunity to thank these gentlemen for their generosity and aid, in contributing joints to our collection. These joints were carefully examined macroscopically and microscopically, and a large number of slides was made from them, somewhat more than 300.

The histories of the patients were abstracted, and the outcome of the cases was ascertained where this was possible. In this way we

were enabled, not only to study the joints, but also to find out the results obtained by different men with various methods of treatment. Many of the patients were my own, and any remarks that may seem invidious in the following pages will seem less so when I say that my errors were as egregious as those of any one else.

The astounding differences of opinion in all matters relating to joint tuberculosis make the comprehension of the subject extremely difficult; and after working for a few months I found that I could not fit my ideas into any of the accepted theories. Even many of the facts seemingly well established, such as the coagulation of fibrin in tuberculous joints, appeared impossible.

After about two years' work I again took up the book, and the enforced idleness incident to a change of residence has enabled me to push it to completion.

The bibliography of joint tuberculosis is very extensive, and it is manifestly impossible in a book of this kind to quote more than a few of the more important articles; enough for a proper understanding of the subject and enough also to enable anyone having a case which he wishes to look up to find here the authority that he needs. Would one go deeper, one has but to consult these references, and in them one will find other references that will soon enable him to trace any subdivision to any length.

It has not seemed wise to go deeply into the subject of braces, which is dealt with at length in orthopædic text-books, nor into operative technique, which is much better handled in works on general surgery.

If the views I advance seem radical, positive, and possibly somewhat over confident, be it remembered that they are based upon a fairly wide clinical experience, as well as upon laboratory work, and that in many instances the stained slides will be found to substantiate them.

It seems strange that, in a subject limited and narrow as this is, one cannot cover the ground oneself, from one's own experience; but it early appeared that a book written on such a plan would be more or less confined in its usefulness, and I have reached out and taken the best, wherever I could find it. It is obvious also that if I can base my conclusions partly on the observations of others they will have added weight.

I have been aided and encouraged by many: Dr. A. J. Markley's photomicrographs form a feature of the book. Dr. Eli Moschowitz, of New York, has given me much valuable advice and assistance. Dr. J. W. Amessee has helped me in abstracting and in reading proofs. Drs. Freeman and Powers have placed their libraries at my disposal.