

and in all cases of general peritonitis, the abdomen should be opened, washed out and drained, and the cause of the peritonitis found and removed.

3rd.—That in cases of localized peritonitis, and in obscure cases of injury not followed by general peritonitis, it is better to follow an expectant plan of treatment, unless abscess formation can be made out.

4th.—That in all cases of abscess formation, opening and draining will give the most rapid convalescence, and will prevent unfavorable rupture into other parts.

5th.—That in view of the complications that may be found after opening the abdomen, the best interests of the patient will be consulted by having the operation done by some one accustomed to do abdominal surgery.

### REPORT OF A CASE OF ACUTE SUPPURATION OF THE KNEE-JOINT, WITH COMPLETE RESTORATION OF FUNCTION.\*

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Although it is now approaching two years since the case which is the subject of my paper was under treatment, yet I have reason to hope that some features of it may prove of interest to you.

Frank F., *æt.* 21, a farm laborer, while engaged with a companion cutting grass, on the 5th of July, 1888, accidentally received a blow from a scythe on the right knee, which inflicted a wound an inch and a half in length, extending backward from a little behind the lower part of the inner border of the patella. It ran parallel with, but was situated a line or two above, the upper margin of the internal semilunar cartilage, and in depth it could not have been extended without opening the synovial cavity.

Within an hour after the accident occurred a medical student carefully washed, sutured and dressed the wound. He also gave excellent advice as to the necessity of keeping the limb absolutely quiet, but failed to make this sure by applying a suitable splint. The result was that in less than three days the patient was again busy in the fields, and owing to the position of the injury the sutures cut through, the wound gaped and became

inflamed and painful. Notwithstanding this, and considerable swelling and stiffness of the part, he refused to quit work.

On the fifteenth day he had a rigor, followed by high fever and a sudden painful swelling of the articulation, which compelled him to remain in the house. For five days various domestic remedies were employed, and these having failed to afford any relief, a message was left at my office. On examination it was easily ascertained that the young man had acute suppurative synovitis. He had severe local pain, and marked constitutional disturbance. The limb was semi-flexed and rotated outward, the knee greatly distended, reddened and œdematous, the patella floating and the circumference of the joint fully three inches greater than normal.

The wound was inflamed, angry in appearance and presented a mass of granular tissue which protruded above the surface of the surrounding skin. From a minute sinus in it, serous pus oozed slowly drop by drop. Doubtless this acted as a safety valve, and prevented a rupture and escape of pus at a less favorable place. Forced flexion or extension of the leg aggravated the constant pain beyond endurance. Anorexia and insomnia were prominent symptoms. His evening temperature was  $103\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  F., and night sweats and occasional delirium indicated septic intoxication.

Not being satisfied with his environment he was advised to go to the city hospital; he promised to do so, but for some reason failed to put in an appearance there before the 5th of August, or one month after the accident, and fifteen days after the onset of suppurative synovitis.

The whole leg had now become œdematous, and the contour of the limb so changed that it might easily lead one to suppose there was partial backward dislocation of the head of the tibia. Two weeks of acute suffering and high fever, with loss of sleep and appetite had told heavily on his constitution; to be brief, he was in a critical condition.

It was difficult at first to decide what line of treatment to follow, and what object to have in view as to result. According to the teaching laid down in the text books of the day, amputation was a question to be considered, but the knowledge that a poor uneducated farm laborer with

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