

to pain and disability which so often supervene in fractures, especially of the long bones. Nature is usually very kind in her efforts to restore the normal form of the parts where this is possible, even to laying down the greater part of a new shaft so as to transmit the strain in the normal axis. But should this happy result not ensue, there often follows an enormous physical disability and great financial depreciation in the wage-earning capacity of the individual.

Operations for faulty union and for non-union have been long practiced, but only recently has the operative treatment of recent fractures been performed, no doubt owing to the possible dangers of infection.

The advantages of operative measures in simple fractures are as follows:

(a) They at once relieve the pain caused by movement of the fragments upon one another and partly due to the tension of the extravasated blood into the tissues.

(b) They greatly shorten the period necessary for repair since union is rapid, perfect, and by first intention, thus shortening the convalescence.

(c) They leave the skeletal mechanics in their original condition, and functionally this is very important.

(d) Passive movements of the neighboring joints are possible almost from the first, which lessens the atrophy of the soft parts and stiffness of the joints, which is usually so marked a feature after splints have been retained for long periods.

A number of points deserve particular attention in considering the operative treatment of recent fractures.

(1) No operation should be performed when perfect results can be obtained by other means. The surgeon can determine by a careful study of each individual case whether he can reasonably hope and expect to bring about a restoration of the parts to their normal form. If not, then operation should be done.

(2) It is very important to secure the careful adjustment of the fragments in those who follow laborious occupations, or else their wage-earning powers may be much reduced. This is especially true with regard to fractures involving the long bones of the extremities, where excessive shortening, malposition or limitation in the movements of a joint may incapacitate an individual from following his ordinary occupation. This unfortunate result can usually be avoided by a timely and skillful operation.

(3) The danger of sepsis must be given every consideration. No one is warranted in operating who does not approach his case