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Original Articles

HYPEREXTENSION OF THE KNEE FOLLOWING HIP DISEASE*

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Hyperextension of the knee joint, or, as it is called, genu recurvatum, is seen not infrequently in persons who have been confined to bed in the supine position for a considerable length of time. Examination of this young woman's condition and enquiry into her history reveals interesting causes as explanatory of her condition.

H. J., fourteen years of age, had scarlet fever five years ago, followed by disease of the right hip. She was treated by recumbency in hospital for nine weeks, followed by a brace, which was worn for a year. The hip now presents no evidence of present disease. The thigh and leg show a moderate degree of atrophy. The right femur is one-half inch shorter than the left, and the tibia slightly shorter than its fellow. The proximal articular surface of this tibia is shown in a radiograph as altered in direction. If a normal tibia be held vertical it will be seen that its upper articular surface slopes backward and downward, whereas the corresponding surface in this bone slopes downward and forward. The radiograph shows also an area of increased density at the anterior portion of the bone, just below the tubercle, at which point the tibia is bent so that its anterior surface recedes and is concave, whereas in the normal bone the anterior border of the bone here presents a convexity forward.

A probable explanation of the altered direction of the superior articular surface is afforded if we assume that the knee was allowed

*Note.—Interesting case shown at the Saturday clinic at the Toronto Orthopedic Hospital.