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Lectures on the Pathology and Treatment of Joint Diseases. By LOUIS BAUER, M. D., M. R. C. S., Eng., &c.

V.

TREATMENT OF JOINT DISEASES—*Continued.*

In the third stage of joint diseases we have still more to deal with both extensive and continued changes in which mostly all the component parts of the articulation are compromised. In whatever tissue the malady might have started, in its progress it has comprised the rest. Thus in synovitis, the articular cartilages have been exposed to constant maceration of pus, and have suffered those elementary metamorphoses to which I invited your attention on a prior occasion. And when at last they drop off in rags and fragments, the osseous surfaces of the epiphyses are in turn subjected to the same obnoxious actions.

With the progress of their disintegration, the periarticular structures become more or less invaded and gradually manifest conditions very similar to those of white swelling. If, on the other hand, the primary affections of the periosteum and epiphysis proceed to the perforation of the articular cavity, it is self-evident that its lining must suffer appropriate alterations. The third stage is consequently a disease of the entire articulation, and its treatment a formidable object of the healing art.

Notwithstanding the undeniable difficulties of these affections, quite a large proportion of the patients recover with or without aid, and sometimes under domestic surroundings of the humblest kind; whereas others run their course to destruction in spite of therapeutic efforts and hygienic advantages. The reason of this difference is not always apparent. Occasionally the abscess determines where the joint gives way to the centri-