

SURGERY.

IN CHARGE OF

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THE DIAGNOSIS OF JOINT TUBERCULOSIS.

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The importance of making a correct diagnosis in cases of joint tuberculosis is evinced by the large number of such cases occurring in surgical practice. In estimating the relative frequency of joint tuberculosis some years ago, for another purpose, the writer found that nearly thirty-one per cent. of all cases of joint disease applying at a dispensary for special orthopedic diseases were cases of joint tuberculosis. In fact, the great frequency of cases of joint tuberculosis has led at the present time to classifying almost all cases of chronic joint diseases as cases of tuberculosis. Dr. J. Collins Warrin in discussing the subject of tuberculosis of bones and joints, at the last meeting of the American Orthopedic Association, referred to a demonstration given some thirty years ago by Professor Sayre, during a lecture of Professor Gross's, in which he demonstrated the tuberculous diseases of the bone. While Professor Gross did not agree with the speaker on this occasion he professed a great admiration for Dr. Sayre, and proposed to let the students have the privilege of listening to his views on this subject. At the present time the pendulum of opinion has swung to the other extreme, and the profession is in danger of attributing all chronic diseases of the joint to tuberculosis.

The early diagnosis of tuberculous diseases of the joints is most important, because it is at this early period that most can be accomplished by medical and surgical treatment. In considering the early diagnosis of joint tuberculosis it is well to consider, in connection with the cause of the disease, not only the age of the epiphysis entering into the formation of the joint, the needs and the appearance of the nutrient artery supplying this part, but also the effect of superincumbent weight upon the part, the important question of heredity, together with the occurrence of traumatism as a causative factor.

Attention has already been called by the writer to each of these subjects, and they need not be considered in detail here ; suffice it to say that heredity plays, in almost all these cases, an important factor ; and it is particularly interesting to observe that frequently children are affected by tubercu