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Original Communications.

CAUSATION OF HIP-JOINT DISEASE.\*

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Gentlemen,—I propose to-night to take up the question of the causation of certain forms of joint disease, especially hip-joint disease. Rapid progress has been made both in the pathology and treatment of this form of disease during the last ten or twelve years. Notwithstanding the tenacity with which one portion of the profession adheres to the venerable teaching of the past, and the enthusiasm with which another portion declares itself in behalf of modern ideas, by far the larger number of the leading members of the profession adhere to the opinion that most cases of this class are the result of constitutional disorder, and that the joint disease is simply a local manifestation of a constitutional diathesis. The modern enquirers take exception to this theory of causation, and firmly assert that all cases arise from local causes.

You will here notice the two extremes—one claiming that the disease is entirely constitutional, the other that it is exclusively local. I must confess that I am a firm believer in the constitutional origin of the disease, and therefore will give you some of the arguments advanced by the local theorists, and then endeavor

\* Delivered before the Medical Society of Toronto School of Medicine.

to answer them by taking the constitutional side of the question. Drs. Bauer and Sayre are two of the strongest advocates of the local origin of the disease on this continent. I will, therefore, first give you some of the reasons advanced by them in support of the faith that is in them.

Dr. Sayre says very many of the patients in the earlier stages of the disease have possessed all the appearances of robust health, and in all cases in which the disease has been cured by Nature's method, the patient, subsequent to the cure, has been hale and hearty. He says, I do not suppose there is a person in this room who cannot call to mind some old fellow with a shortened hip perfectly ankylosed, who yet has a ruddy face, a good, healthy complexion, and is a vigorous, robust old man. If he had had scrofula in his system it would have remained there, and when his hip had recovered the man would have been a miserable old fellow after all. The very fact of his becoming a vigorous, robust man after going through all the exhausting effects of hip-joint disease proves, in my judgment, that the disease is not of constitutional origin. The additional fact that in so many cases the joint has been excised when the patients have been apparently at the point of death, and subsequently becoming strong and vigorous, is good evidence that the disease is not constitutional. Another fact worthy of consideration is that a very large proportion of cases of the disease occur in children, while the scrofulous condition is by no means so restricted. He also goes on to show that hip-joint disease is seldom seen in infants up to the age of three