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FORCIBLE FLEXION IN FIBROUS ADHESIONS.

BY JOHN GARDNER, M.D., HESPELER, ONT.

Thinking it of interest, I will take the liberty of giving you a history of my own case with treatment employed. About fourteen years ago I was employed as a surveyor on the shores of Lake Superior. In my work I received a severe wound close to the inner margin of the patella of the right knee entering the joint, from which the synovial fluid escaped in considerable quantity. I was so situated that no medical aid could be procured, and merely bandaged it up and made arrangements to start for home. Being many miles distant, it was very painful during my journey, and it was evident that synovitis had set in. On arriving home, a medical man was sent for and diagnosed synovitis. Hot poultices were applied week after week, the joint suppurating profusely all the time; the leg was kept perfectly straight and no attempt at motion used whatever. At my request the poultices were discontinued and other dressing employed. The wound gradually healed up, so that at the end of nine months I was able to leave my bed, but not the house for several weeks after.

Since then I have myself studied medicine, and have been employed in the practice of my profession in California and other parts; but my leg has always been a great trouble to me—being perfectly straight and stiff, I walked with a limp. If my toe came in contact with anything, it produced great pain in the knee, and while riding in my buggy it was very inconvenient, not being able to sit square on the seat or on a chair, owing to the amount of pressure that was produced on the back part of the thigh.

I consulted many eminent surgeons in the United States, some of whom thought by operating, some motion could be obtained in the joint, others did not favour any interference; but being myself desirous of gaining the use of my limb, returned home with that intent. After coming here, I consulted Dr. Sylvester of Galt, and he considered an operation advisable. May 28th was fixed upon as the day, and the operation was proceeded with as follows: I was placed on a table and brought thoroughly under the influence of chloroform by Dr. Philips, I was then drawn well down over the end of the table and a block of wood was placed under the lower end of the femur to act as a fulcrum, the thigh was well fixed by assistants, and flexion was attempted. At first it was thought impossible to break down the adhesions that had formed. Dr. Sylvester informs me that the amount of force required far exceeded his expectations, but by continued pressure the adhesions gradually gave way with audible cracking sounds, and the leg was brought down to nearly right angles. It was worked up and down several times with ease. I was then placed in bed and the knee encased in rubber tubing, and water kept constantly running through, which kept the leg cool and prevented any inflammation. Morphine was administered, and very little pain followed, though the parts were somewhat tender. The leg was at first kept quiet and straight. At the end of eight days I was again chloroformed and the leg flexed; but little force was required to bring it down. This time my leg was kept bent at nearly right angles, and tubing used as before. After the bandages were removed, the leg gradually straightened out. I now procured one of Tiemann's ankylosis splints with a screw behind the knee, and used this twice a day flexing the leg to nearly a right angle. It is now three months since the operation, and I am able to walk by the aid of a cane, and can flex my leg by muscular action to an angle of 45 degrees. I might here add that the extensor muscles of the thigh were very much atrophied, but are gaining in size and strength. I am confident that in the course of time, I will walk as well as ever.

I take this opportunity of thanking those who assisted in the operation, and especially Dr. Sylvester, whose attention has been untiring.