

CHRONIC POLY-ARTHRITIS IN A CHILD.

BY

F. G. FINLEY, M.D.,

Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine in McGill University; Physician to the Montreal General Hospital.

Whilst acute or sub-acute articular rheumatism is extremely common in children, it is universally admitted that both chronic rheumatism and osteo-arthritis are extremely rare conditions. Cases of rheumatoid arthritis are recorded or referred to by several of the systematic writers on children's diseases.

Henoch (Lectures on diseases of Children), and West (Diseases of Children), each refer to two cases.

Garrod (Gout and Rheumatic Gout) figures the hand and foot of a child of three in which the proximal phalangeal joints are affected.

Osler speaks of having seen three or four cases in children, whilst Howard (Pepper's System of Medicine) and Fagge both refer to its occasional occurrence in early life.

Lloyd Davies (*Lancet*, 1893, II., 928) records a case in a child of six following an attack of acute rheumatism a year previously. The joints affected were some of the smaller articulations of the hands and feet, and also the wrists, elbows and knees.

The following case is still under treatment by Dr. Kirkpatrick at the Montreal General Hospital. I am indebted to Dr. P. C. Leslie for the clinical history.

The patient, a girl of 11 years, was admitted to the hospital March 1st, 1896, for pain and stiffness of the joints.

The mother attributes the onset of the illness to a kick on the right ankle in May, 1892. There was no ill effect at the time, but two months later she began to limp and the ankle became swollen.

The disease was then regarded as of a tubercular nature and a plaster of paris bandage was applied for several weeks in August and again in March, 1893, but without very much benefit.

In the autumn of 1893 the right knee became swollen, followed by the metacarpo phalangeal articulations and a little later by the wrist, left ankle and left knee. After Christmas the child was unable to walk. She has since then been confined to bed and the legs have gradually become drawn up and contracted. The neck became painful and the head twisted to the left in December. The swelling passed away from the joints in 1894, leaving them stiff and useless.