

## Surgery.

### ON SURGICAL USES OF THE STRONG ELASTIC BANDAGE OTHER THAN HÆMOSTATIC.

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For over twenty-five years I have made use of a strong bandage of India rubber, for the treatment and cure of all ulcers of the lower extremity of a non-specific character, coming at all within the category of curable, and as a most efficient aid to treatment and palliation in those of a specific character and those incapable of perfect cure by any method of treatment; and I may here say that a very large proportion of ulcers of the lower extremities practically incurable by other methods are capable of easy and permanent cure by this.\*

\* I use such a bandage in the treatment palliative and curative of many other diseases and injuries, principally of the lower extremities; but of these I will, at the present time, give only a partial list, reserving a detailed account of its application to such cases for a future paper. The present writing will refer exclusively to the treatment of ulcers of the lower extremity. The principal cases, other than these, in which I have found such bandages eminently useful are, (and I mention them in the order of their importance, and the perfect applicability of this method to their treatment); (1.) Acute and chronic synovitis and consequent effusion in the joints, particularly of the knee, ankle, and elbow. (2.) Subluxations of those joints to which the bandage can be applied, both in their acute and chronic stages. (3.) Morbid effusion in the bursa mucosa, especially, after evacuation by aspiration, of the bursa developed over the patellæ, and known as "housemaid's-knee," and by other names. (4.) Œdema and anasarca, whether due to local or general causes, and occurring in either the lower or upper extremity, but chiefly, of course, the former. (5.) As an admirable palliative, and even in some instances, to a certain degree, means of curing varicose veins of the lower extremity, occurring either with or without ulcers. (6.) As a most efficient adjunct to treatment of erysipelas of either the legs or arms, whether traumatic or idiopathic, and, in very many cases, capable, without other means, of entirely curing, and, as it were, *extinguishing* that so called "*ignis sancti Antonii*." (7.) As a very valuable adjunct to the treatment of many cutaneous diseases, particularly when affecting the lower extremity, and as, without any other means whatever, local or general, absolutely and completely curative of many of these affections and their consequences. (8.) As a very useful surgi-

The bandage which I use in the treatment of ulcers of the leg, is made of what is technically called "pure rubber," i.e., the best "Para" rubber, combined with the smallest possible mixture of sulphur, and subjected to the minimum of heat necessary to "cure" the gum and ensure it from the destructive changes which rapidly take place in bandages made of pure uncured caoutchouc. The bandage is ten and

cal dressing after dislocation of any joint to which it can be applied, but particularly those of the knee elbow and ankle. (9.) As an extremely useful surgical dressing for some cases of that form of lesion entitled "green-stick-fracture," in which a gradual, continually exercised, gentle pressure accomplishes that perfect "reduction" which cannot always be accomplished at once even by painful and unduly violent manipulation. Also in cases of deformity of bones from improper coaptation of fracture, where the "callus" is too firm to admit of immediate bending, this sort of bandage, properly applied, has been found quite capable, by the constant, steady pressure which it exercises, of correcting deformity in fractured bones, even so long after injury as to be generally supposed capable of such correction by no means save that of re-fracture. (10.) As a most useful appliance eminently palliative, and sometimes even to a great degree rapidly and completely curative of injury of the ligamentous and other tissues of joints, resulting from contusion or other injury, or from relaxation of ligaments from disease. (11.) As a most efficient palliative of, and often decided means of remedying chronic and acute inflammation of and about the joints or other parts of a limb; in phlebitis; as a preventive when abscess is threatened, or, in such cases, when too far advanced for prevention, as a means to hasten forward the process of suppuration. This enumeration of cases in which the strong elastic bandage has been found, *in actual practice*, very decidedly useful, although somewhat extended is, by no means, exhaustive. When the intelligent practitioner becomes familiar with, and reflects upon, the phenomena observed after the bandage has been applied the effect of continuous, gentle, equable pressure, of perfect exclusion from air and light, of the constant moisture and equal warmth of the part involved in the bandage, of the constant support afforded to distended and weakened vessels, the relief of congestions by the mechanical expulsion of blood from the overloaded veins and capillaries, he will have little difficulty in perceiving the value of this method of treatment in the cases I have mentioned, and many others. I shall, at some future time, write a paper or two based on my personal experience in the use of the bandage for other cases besides those of ulcers of the lower extremity. At present I only wish to intimate what some of these are.