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REST IN THE TREATMENT OF
JOINT DISEASES.

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THE object of this paper is two-fold—to show that rest, mechanical and physiological, is the most efficient factor in the treatment of diseased joints, and to describe some of the most effective means for obtaining rest.

Since Hilton delivered his able course of lectures on "Rest and Pain," more attention has been given to the treatment of surgical diseases by affording nature an opportunity to carry out her own benign purposes. When pain indicates the existence of pleurisy, it becomes the duty of the physician to assist nature by immobilizing the thoracic walls; when the eye is inflamed or exposed to a glaring light, rest is obtained for it by nature closing the eyelids, and the resources of art may give further assistance when employed to secure, for the eye, physiological rest.

When a joint is diseased nature's first effort at rendering assistance is in the direction of securing immobilization, by thickening of the soft structures about the joint, and by the contraction of the muscles which control its movements.

Hilton has enunciated the law of nerve distribution, which affords us the explanation of the phenomena which occur sequentially upon a joint becoming inflamed. It may be

thus stated: "The nerves supplying parts functionally associated are themselves associated at their origin." He also describes the nerve supply to the shoulder in illustration of the law enunciated. The circumflex nerve supplies the deltoid, teres minor, the skin over the deltoid, over the fascia into which the deltoid is partly inserted, and sends an articular branch to the shoulder joint. Also the subscapular and suprascapular nerves send filaments to the joint, and supply the muscles which move the joint. This distribution to the parts about the joint implies physiological harmony in its various functions, and affords an explanation of the reflex muscular action by which nature strives to secure rest for the articulation. When the joint structures become inflamed, so that movement is painful and harmful, the muscles of the joint are put on guard, and all become strongly contracted to immobilize the articulation. In nearly all joints the flexors are more powerful than the extensors, and hence, as time passes, they overcome their opponents, and the flexion which results, so well shown in disease of the knee and hip, affords an illustration of the blindness of nature's unaided efforts. As disease in the joint continues, flexion slowly but surely increases.

Great diversity of opinion exists regarding the treatment of sprains. One claims good results from immobilization long continued, affording complete rest; another upholds the very opposite treatment, and sounds the praises of massage. Seeing that there is rupture of the fibrous structures about the joint, tearing